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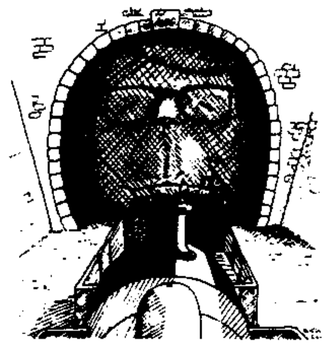

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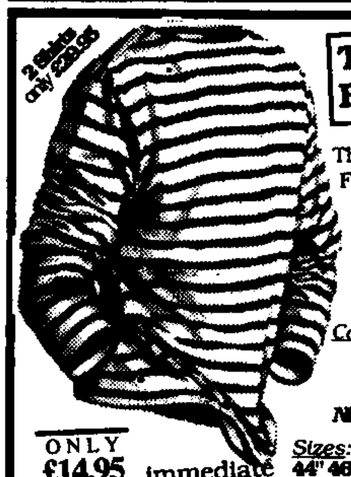

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Gnome

IT IS with some regret that I learn that the editor of the Sunday Gnomes, Mr Brillo Pad, is to leave his post to become senior executive of the prestigious Gnome subsidiary Fux-TV in Palm Springs, California.

Mr Pad has been a fearless champion of free speech and has never been afraid to say "Yes, sir, I'll print anything you like" when I ring him up in the middle of the night.

Moreover, Mr Pad in his time at the Sunday Gnomes has assembled an extraordinary array of talent under his aegis, including such household names as Mr McLie, Miss Lynn Baba The She Elephant, Mrs Conrad Black (no relation), Ms Julie Bullshit and *(Strobes, fill in other names. I never read the paper. Gnome).*

However, I am delighted to welcome Mr Pad abroad the new information super highway that is the Gnome TV/Cable/Sat/Filth Empire and rest assured that he will bring to his new job the same qualities that he brought to his old (or he *will* be fired).

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COLOUR SECTION

FACED with an inquiry by the district auditor into Westminster city council's corrupt behaviour, Lady Porter, its then leader, tried to nobble Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary of the day, and persuade him to sack the then controller of the audit commission, Howard Davies.

Until late 1990, Porter and her supporters had thought nothing of the threat that the district auditor would be investigating their expensive vote-rigging policies. After all, they had already deflected a district auditor's report into what seemed a far more serious matter: the sale of three cemeteries for 15 pence to the benefit of a company which has never been identified (the cemeteries had to be bought back by the council for £4.5 million).

Lady Porter's view was that if Westminster Tories held firm, the vote-rigging scandal would go the same way: nowhere. But two terrible things happened for Lady Porter at the end of 1990: Margaret Thatcher, her heroine and role model, left Downing Street in a hurry; and a solitary Tory councillor, Patricia Kirwan, decided she had had enough and started to tell the district auditor about Lady Porter's plots.

The district auditor suddenly became a serious nuisance. Porter and her staff did some "research" and decided that Howard Davies, controller of the audit commission, was "suspect": or to use a more familiar Thatcherite term, "not one of us".

This prompted Porter to approach John Major's new environment chief, Michael Heseltine, remind him of his responsibility for the commission, impress on him that it had been set up by Thatch to regulate spendthrift Labour councils not Tory ones, and to urge him to sack the dangerous lefty Davies.

To her uncontrollable fury, Heseltine refused even to meet the Queen of Westminster. His officials reminded her that the commission was an independent body which carried out its own inquiries, and in any case its controller had no control over investigations of the district auditor for Westminster.

Porter seethed about the "new wimps" in government and sought redress elsewhere. Soon after the abortive approach to Hezza, the London *Evening Standard* got a series of "top level" leaks that members of the audit commission were fed up with Howard Davies and wanted him to resign.

Eight commission members were telephoned by the *Standard* with the suggestion — and all eight said at once that Davies had their full confidence. They told Davies about the allegations, which were so obviously untrue that even the *Standard* did not print them.

Porter had burnt her boats with the environment department, her faithful *Evening Standard* and with the audit commission.

PS: Howard Davies was *such* a loony lefty he became director-general of that well-known Marxist-Leninist group, the Confederation of British Industry.

WHY has Asil Nadir, the king of Polly Peck, taken such a hammering over his political connections and Nazmudin Virani, the king of Control Securities, got away so lightly?

The day after his conviction, neither the *Telegraph*, the *Independent*, the *Guardian* or the *Financial Times* found space to mention Virani's close relationship with top politicians. None referred, for instance, to Virani's devotion to the Rt Hon Kenneth Baker when the latter was chairman of the Tory party and, in the run-up to the 1992 election, Virani was often at Baker's side helping to fund important functions.

The glamorous "One Nation" forum at the Blackpool Tory conference of 1991, for instance, was funded by Virani. And so generous was the affable hotelier that he was considered important enough to meet the prime minister.

In September 1991, a lunch was laid on at Dorneywood, Baker's grace and favour stately home, in which his only two guests were Virani and John Major. The conversation roamed widely but kept coming back to the importance of returning the government at the next election — and the importance of funding the Tory party.

How much Virani pledged on that occasion has not been made clear, but there is no such thing as a free lunch at Dorneywood — especially not just before a general election.

Virani, who was convicted of cheating the auditors into believing BCCI had enormous profits when it had enormous losses, believes in greasing the palms of all politicians, without fear or favour.

Though he predicted the Tories would win and donated accordingly, he also gave £2,500 for a Labour party research project and constantly patronised the Liberals. Two weeks before his appearance at the Tory party conference in 1991, he appeared at the Liberal Democrat party conference, singing the praises of Paddy Ashdown and generously paying for party functions. Ashdown and his wife adored him.

So did Sir David Steel, the scourge of Tory corruption in the Pergau dam scandal. When Virani was charged by the serious fraud office (SFO), he came up with a typically charming and effusive character reference for the court.

TWO separate reports to be published in the next few weeks state unequivocally that satanic abuse does not exist, and has never existed, in this country.

Both the department of health and the police have spent three years — and around £20 million — reexamining every case where satanic abuse was alleged. They have been unable to find a shred of evidence to back up the allegations.

Perhaps they would now care to reexamine the infamous Orkney scandal (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*), where every child taken into care — apart from one who hadn't at that time acquired the vocabulary to confess — apparently "admitted" to having taken part in satanic ceremonies at which they were abused.

After more than three years, five of the children are *still* in care and threatened with imminent adoption. Their treatment at the hands of social workers hell-bent on proving the existence of ritual satanic abuse has been disgraceful. The travel costs of returning them to a mother who has constantly fought to get them home would, of course, be rather less than £20 million.

- *Hallo to Robert Maxwell!* 5
- *Local Election Special* 10
- *Eurotrash* 8
- *£100 Prize Crossword* 15

Street of Shame

The Sunday Telegraph

THE elections in South Africa will have shocked Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, the *Sunday Telegraph*'s former voice of insanity.

"We are dealing with a people who have not yet fully begun to fight and who, once they are provoked to fight, will almost certainly prove invincible," he wrote when still entrusted with the paper's leading articles.

Sir Peregrine — or plain old Perishing Worthless as he was when he made his brilliant prediction in 1986 — was not talking about the black majority, sadly, but fellow loonies in the Afrikaner minority.

In a grovelling endorsement of the Tories' anti-sanctions stance he wrote: "To her eternal credit, Mrs Thatcher refuses to lend her voice to those encouraging the blacks to believe that victory is within their grasp." As last weekend's results showed, Worsthorne was always head and shoulders above rival opinion formers. "White supremacy is there to stay," he predicted.

No wonder he and Thatch were put out to grass in the savannah.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

AS Andrew Neill bids farewell to Wapping, *Sunset Times* hacks are puzzling over this question: why has he been replaced by unknown ST executive John Witherow rather than the gorgeous, pouting Sue Douglas, who was the more obvious heir apparent?

The answer is simple. While interviewing her for the job last week, Rupert Murdoch suddenly sighed and said how weary he felt. La Douglas leaned forward, put her hand consolingly on his knee and said "There, there, Rupert" — or words to that effect. The puritanical Digger was so shocked by this unwarranted intimacy that he resolved at once to give her only the deputy editorship.

Even so, she still seems likely to leave quite a mark on the paper. She has wisely decided to dispense with the weekly vapourings of Peter McKay — Andrew Neill's favourite journalist — and hand his column over to TV presenter Mariella Frostrup.

Poor old McLie has, we understand, yet to be informed of the decision.

EXPRESS

***DAILY EXPRESS* editor Sir Nick Lloyd is unhappy with the conduct of some of his trusted lieutenants.**

One night recently, after Sir Nick and his daytime secretary Wendy had left the office, associate editor Craig "Bog-brush" McKenzie wandered down to the editor's office and asked Ruth, the evening secretary, to give him the keys to the editor's drinks cabinet.

She obliged and McKenzie, along with deputy editor Paul Potts and executive editor Alan Frame, proceeded to empty the cabinet of its contents. When this was discovered, the executives got off with slapped wrists while the hapless Ruth was sacked.

Lloyd is also incandescent with rage at his fellow Express Newspapers editor, the *Daily Star*'s Brian Hitchen, who gave an interview to *Options* magazine in which he said he would like to edit the *Daily Express* to make it better (could *anyone* make it worse?) Sir Nick has put in a call to his proprietor, Lord Stevens, seeking "clarification".

Daily Mirror

IN SPITE of David Montgomery's "new broom", some things at the *Daily Mirror* never change — notably its coverage of motor racing.

For 30 years the paper's motor-sports correspondent has been Ted Macauley, who lives in Manchester. During the Maxwell era he was consistently humiliated by the then sports editor Keith Fisher, who would keep Macauley waiting until the last minute before telling him whether he was allowed to attend a grand prix. Often, on a whim, Fisher would send him to report a football match at Boundary Park, Oldham, instead.

Thus when Damon Hill won his first race, at the Hungarian grand prix, the next day's paper carried a report "from Ted Macauley, Budapest". In fact, Macauley had been obliged to watch the race on a TV set in the *Mirror*'s Oldham office.

Now there is a new, Montgomery-approved sports editor in the form of David Balmforth. And last weekend he faced one of his first big tests, as in the space of three days two drivers were killed and another injured at the San Marino grand prix track, Imola.

Monday's *Mirror* duly carried extensive coverage by its expert correspondent, Ted Macauley. "Hellfire Corner — that's what I called it long before jinxed Imola became a tragic death circuit," he wrote. "I saw Nelson Piquet and Gerhard Berger crash there and survive. Yesterday, I saw the tragedy all over again — only this time much, much worse."

What he neglected to mention was that he watched Ayrton Senna's crash on a television set in the north-west of England. Balmforth, keeping up his predecessor's tradition, had decided it wasn't worth sending Macauley to the race; the luckless hack had been ordered to stay at home and cover a goalless draw between Oldham and Sheffield Wednesday.

The People

JANE PRESTON, who was fired from the *People* just before she was due to depart for maternity leave (*Eyes passim*), is not the first employee of David "Rommel" Montgomery to find he is not always well disposed towards women who have children.

Back in the late eighties, when Rommel edited *Today*, hackette Cathy Galvin had the temerity to return to work after her maternity leave. Retribution was swift: Montgomery first demoted her and then sacked her.

Monty struck again in November 1992 on his arrival at the Mirror Group, where Galvin was by then editing the *People*'s colour supplement. She was among the first to get the chop — fresh from another maternity leave.

On this occasion, however, it seems Galvin's fecundity was not the main reason for her downfall. For, seven months earlier, she had sacked commissioning editor Heidi Kingstone from the *People* magazine on the grounds of general uselessness. Kingstone is, of course, David Montgomery's wife.

Daily Mail

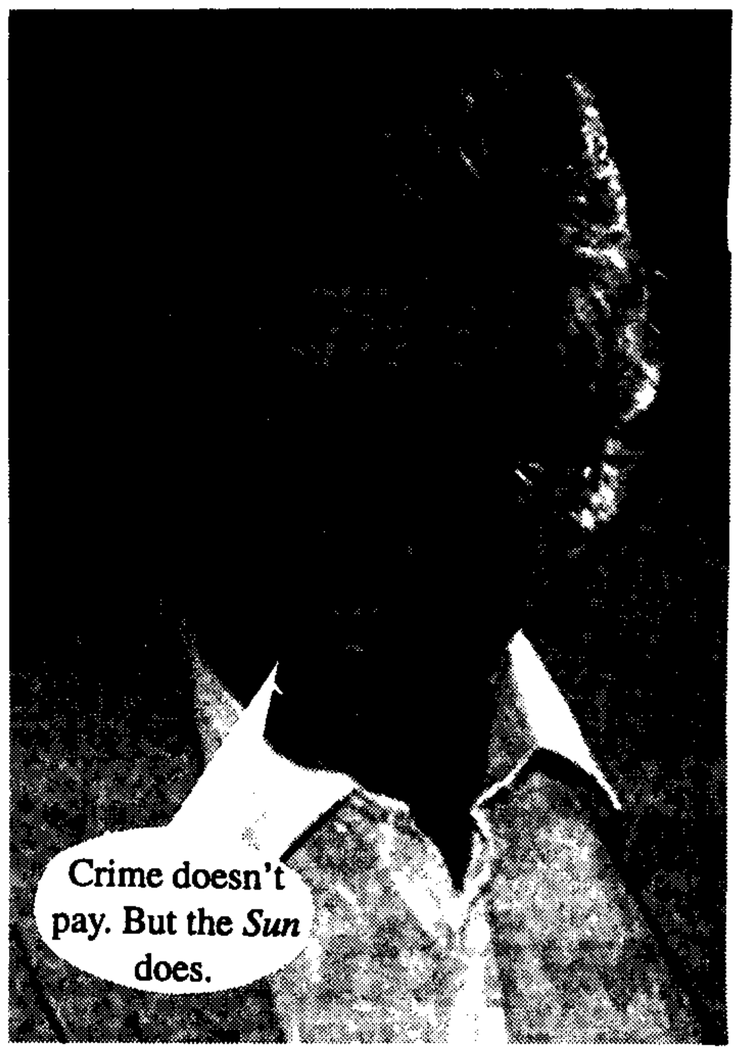
LORD ROTHERMERE's mighty *Daily Mail* is, of course, a stern advocate of law 'n' order. How embarrassing, then, that it has just been caught fiddling the sales figures for its *Daily Mail Ski Magazine*.

During a recent inspection visit to the mag's offices, a team from the Audit Bureau of Circulation "uncovered a number of 'sales' and free circulation included in the ABC figure that could not be supported by the correct audit documentation to the publishers' financial records as required by ABC rules", according to a bulletin issued to ABC members last month.

"Owing to the serious nature of the problems encountered, and the volume of copies involved, the ABC Council have authorised the withdrawal and immediate re-audit of the circulation figures concerned."

We look forward to reading an outraged editorial in the *Mail* about this distressing decline in moral standards.

KNIGHT HOOD



MEANWHILE Pratt-Dumpster's mental condition continues to deteriorate as he contemplates a future without a staff.

Dumpster's deputy Adam Helliker, who has left to become features editor of the *News of the Screws*, resolved to seek alternative employment after an incident last year which demonstrated Dumpster's loyalty and gratitude.

Helliker was abroad when he fractured a vertebra in a boating accident. While he was laid up on his back for several weeks, Dumpster wrote a memo to *Mail* editor Paul Dacre complaining that Helliker could no longer be his deputy as he was perpetually off sick.

Now Dumpster has been granted his wish, he is desperately searching for a decent deputy. The *Mail* cannot afford to hire the royal correspondent of the *News of the Screws*, Clive Goodman, while Dumpster's first choice is the *Mail*'s own royal correspondent Richard Kay — who has told Dacre he will resign from the paper if forced to work for Dumpster.

Meanwhile, having learnt of Dumpster's treatment of Kate Sissons — by reading about it in the *Eye* — Dacre is furious that his pisspoor diarist had not informed him of the situation.

The operatically-built hackette Ms Sissons is ready to sue the paper for constructive dismissal if her request for a transfer from Dumpster's miasmic presence is not met, and she has chosen the *Evening Standard*'s donnish leader-writer, Peter Bradshaw, as her witness in negotiations with management. Even Dacre believes her case has merit.

Meanwhile, to add to Dumpster's isolation, his third-in-command Janet King – the only remaining hack in his office – has announced her resignation. She is joining Helliker at the *News of the Screws*.

JUST FANCY THAT

"I'm a radio junkie. I love *The Food Programme* and *The Archers*. I stood sobbing hopelessly over Mark Hebden's death."
— Dillie Keane, the Guardian, 7 April 1994.

"Vanessa Whitburn is the goon who has transformed *The Archers* from a charming look at English life into a saga full of death and depression... I keep listening, in case it gets better. But perhaps we should all protest by switching off this morning and the next few Sundays till they find a new editor with a light heart."
— Dillie Keane, Mail on Sunday, 17 April 1994.

HALLO!

The new heartwarming column by *'The Marquesa'*

HALLO! VILE slurs are emerging regarding the sexual habits of the late Robert Maxwell. As a former friend and confidante, the Marquesa will give them full publicity in Hallo! — so they can be exposed as the damnable lies they surely are.

Panorama, the BBC current affairs programme which broadcast a horrid attack on the great man before his death, has in its possession certain "depositions" from women who claim to have "slept" with Mr Maxwell.

These were not referred to in the broadcast but, slyly, had been obtained as "ammunition" in case of a lawsuit.

And what do these women report? That Mr Maxwell had asked them to lie perfectly still — as if they were no longer alive.

What can this mean?

HALLO! *HOW SAD that Albert Goldman, controversial biographer of Elvis Presley and John Lennon, should himself have met such an unfortunate end.*

Mr Goldman died while flying from America to Britain to appear on BBC2's Late Show — itself no stranger to tragedy — and with no family or close friends willing to pay for a funeral his death posed a problem for the show's impoverished producers.

They couldn't really sit him in the studio with the other guests and pretend nothing had happened; and nor could they afford a big funeral. So instead they had him cremated at Heathrow airport which has a modestly priced facility reserved for such occasions.

John Birt — no doubt delighted his team had avoided hefty funeral bills — will also have been impressed by the canny way they disposed of the ashes. They sent them back to the States — by Federal Express.

HALLO! **ANDREW NEILL'S departure from these shores has caused great sorrow to the many Essex girls who belong to Tramp, the fashionable nightclub where Andrew likes to dance the night away.**

These mini-skirted lovelies are so fond of Andrew they have a pet name for him — "Malteser". Fortunately, he has yet to discover that this is in fact rhyming slang for "old geezer".

HALLO! OUR sympathy to Britt Ekland, actress and writer, who despite several tumultuous relationships has never once courted personal publicity nor traded on her appearance in the popular press.

Now that she *has* spoken to the newspapers — about a serious literary matter: publication of her first novel — what a tragedy that years of reticence should be repaid with a hatchet job by Martyn Harris in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Unkindly, Harris of the *Hellograph*, not only revealed that Ms Ekland was Swedish and beautiful, but wrote of her very private marriage to Peter Sellers.

Ms Ekland was angry at this — and at one or two other details, unrepeatable in a family magazine — and sent him a stiff fax. "I thought you were a nice middle-aged man... I was obviously wrong. HRT might help though, otherwise try moderate exercise (in your case walking) and a meat free diet, it is said meat feeds once [*sic*] aggressions, so try to avoid it... In the future why don't you stick to safe things like interviewing MPs or authors well known and read by you".

HALLO! **TO LUNCH with the delightful Joan Collins, whose exemplary table manners are a wonder to behold.**

Would that one could say the same of the scrofulous gossip merchants who hound her every step. Even the "serious" *Guardian* has had a go at her, Joanie tells me between forkfuls of polenta.

The paper had run a profile of her by someone called Judy Rumbold, and it included, she said, many spiteful and untrue comments on her behaviour over lunch.

Because Joan is such a gentlewoman, she let the matter drop. But imagine her horror when she saw the lunch episode reheated and served up in the *Mail on Sunday*'s *Night & Day* supplement under the heading: The Lunch Date from Hell.

Joanie immediately told her lawyers to sue the Mail for libel. And she was not that surprised to learn that the reptile who had bought the excerpt from the *Guardian* was one Jocelyn "Miss" Targett — the husband of a certain Judy Rumbold.

DOGS TODAY

Viscount Rothermere, proprietor of the *Mail* newspaper empire and founder of *Dogs Today*, insisted on one very special guest at his recent Paris wedding to former international model Maiko Lee – his Japanese Akita, Ryu-ma. The dog sported a red bow in honour of the occasion.

● *From DOGS today magazine*

HALLO! *NO ONE cares more about our architectural heritage than Nigel Dempster, whose marriage to the Hon. Lady Pratt of Dumpster places him at the very heart of the minor aristocracy.*

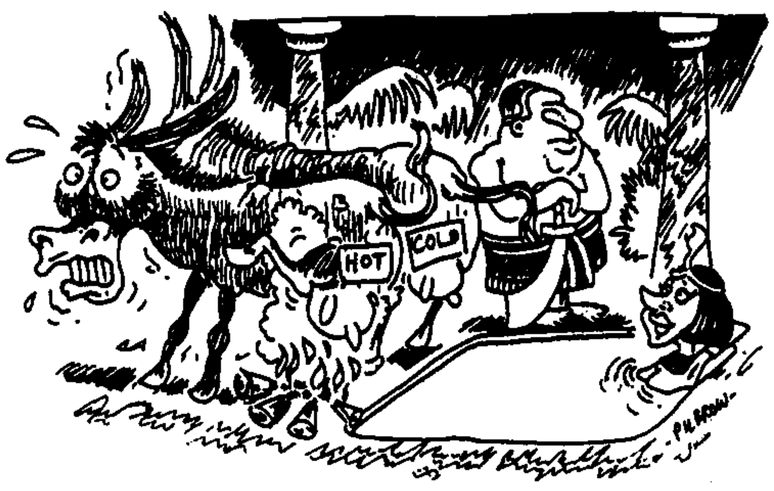
Recognising his patrician responsibilities, he never tires in his efforts to protect the great houses of England: particularly those on Ham Common in Surrey.

Readers of his scintillating column in the Daily Mail will know he regularly attacks those on the common who make tasteless alterations to their properties.

Over several years the Prince of Abu Dhabi has been a popular target because of extensions to his English home at Park Gate House, Ham Common. And Lady Annabel Goldsmith, a nearby resident at Ormeley Lodge, Ham Common, has been approvingly quoted as objecting to the crown prince's works.

Recently a new target has appeared: John Beckwith, who has just sold Forbes House, Ham Common, having "reduced to rubble" the house that was on the site. Nigel explained gloatingly that Mr Beckwith had lost more than £1 million pounds on the sale.

Anyone wishing to join Nigel's selfless campaign can write to him care of Endsleigh Lodge, 25 Ham Common, Ham, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7JB.



GORDON BROWN, Labour's shrewd shadow chancellor, is well known in his native Scotland as a passionate defender of workers suffering from uncaring bosses.

When dockers at Rosyth in his constituency faced redundancy, for instance, he was unsparing in his criticism of the defence secretary and led a deputation of workers to Downing Street.

Yet he has been curiously silent about another such situation, in which 64 journalists — one third of the editorial total — at Scotland's biggest-selling tabloids, the *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail*, have been made redundant in a most shabby fashion. (One *Record* hack who was forced to leave has ended up in hospital with a breakdown.)

Surely Brown's silence has nothing to do with the fact that David "Rommel" Montgomery's flagship paper in Scotland is a stout supporter of the Labour party? Or that one of the *Record*'s highly-paid weekly columnists is none other than Gordon Brown MP?

One ex-*Record* staffer wrote to Brown asking him to think again about working for a management which any self-respecting socialist would obviously find repulsive. He eventually replied, saying "I understand all your concerns". He is still writing for the *Record* and is now known as the paper's Fifth Columnist.

RARELY does a comedy show prompt investigation by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission, but sensitive souls at the chemicals firm Albright and Wilson Ltd have taken offence to Rory Bremner.

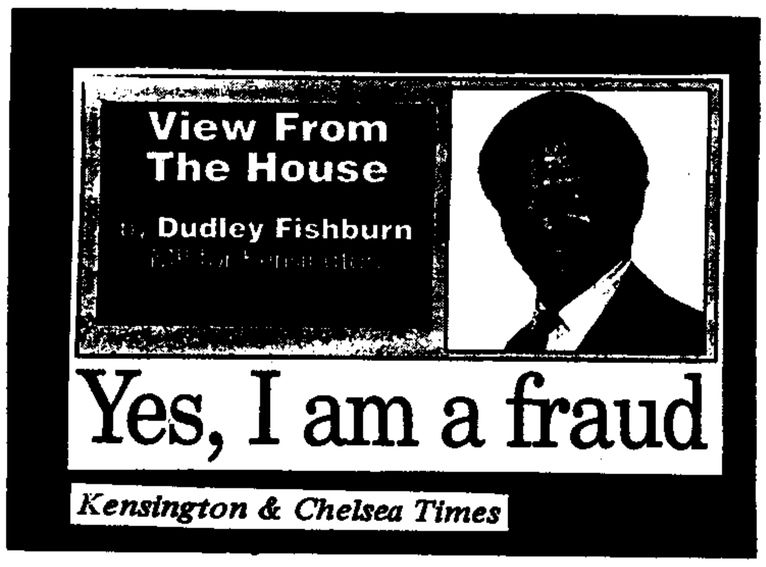
He made a jibe at one of their consultants — Labour's shadow foreign secretary, Jack Cunningham — the chemicals firm taking offence when Bremner said the MP's "flexible integrity was demonstrated during the '80s when he combined the post of shadow environment secretary with that of adviser to Albright and Wilson, the popular manufacturers of pesticide and pollution".

The company said the reference was unjust and unfair because it stopped manufacturing chemicals in 1984. But it didn't dispute the reference to pollution; and in any case Dr Cunningham became a consultant before the firm disposed of its pesticides business.

Rejecting the complaint, the commission said it did "not find injustice or unfairness to the company in the reference to it as a producer of pesticide and pollution". Fair enough. But what does Cunningham's boss John Smith think? Perhaps Bremner will write another sketch and tell us.

OF THE 44 MPs who voted against the third reading of the criminal justice bill at 3am on 13 April, 43 were Labour. The 44th was John Watts, Tory MP for Slough and the powerful chairman of the treasury select committee.

Tories are surprised that Watts chose a law and order bill to make his first rebellion. Things must be getting serious.



TORY backbenchers have been briefed by their whips to refer wherever possible to the Maxwell pensions scandal. This is because Robert Maxwell was a Labour supporter and any reference to the scandal is expected to smear the Labour party.

Meanwhile the government, in the sweaty shape of Peter Lilley, social services secretary, is grappling with the central recommendation from the Goode committee on pensions. The committee was specially set up after the Maxwell scandal and closely picked for "safeness" (no trade unionists or similar).

The recommendation was that in future a third of all occupational pension fund trustees should be elected by the workforce. This entirely modest proposal was put forward as a means of stopping rigid control of pension funds by unscrupulous employers like Maxwell. (In fact, some Mirror group pension fund trustees were elected by the workforce: Maxwell simply bribed, bullied or promoted them into acquiescence. But the thought was a good one.)

The proposal for elected trustees is not obviously popular with employers, who love having their hands on their pension funds in case of emergencies. A secret campaign has been launched by employers organisations, notably by the Institute of Directors, to keep their members' exclusive fingers on the funds. Lilley and Co have reacted with typical courage and forcefulness. They have backed down at once and intend to reject the recommendation.

WRITING in the *Guardian* in March Patrick Nicholls MP, chairman of the all-party Indonesian parliamentary committee, observed that Indonesia was "a country which has made valiant efforts to westernise its attitude to human rights".

One of these new western approaches must be the reintroduction of a "shoot to kill" policy by the Jakarta police.

President Suharto admitted in his autobiography that he sanctioned such a policy back in the 1980s to deter crime. The policy has now been revived under the codename "Operation Mighty-Strike", and 24 people were shot in the first two months of this year — many while "resisting arrest".

Such figures impress the armed forces commander-in-chief, Gen Tanjung, who said: "Bandits have to be exterminated. No way will we foster them... After giving a warning shot, they don't stop. There is nothing left but to exterminate them."

Anybody who is thinking of protesting about this approach ought to bear in mind Patrick Nicholls' conclusion: "If it is to be helped further it will be by recognising what Indonesia has achieved, not by traducing it before the bar of world opinion."

AS THE contest hots up to take over Roy Hattersley's Birmingham Sparkbrook seat there has been a sudden increase in claims for invalidity benefit in the constituency.

The recipients have benefited from the wisdom of the Birmingham Tribunal Unit, a worthy organisation funded by the Labour city council to help social security claimants maximise their benefit.

The tribunal has been particularly effective in Sparkbrook where dozens of people have switched from income support or the dole to the far more lucrative invalidity benefit.

Coincidentally, most beneficiaries are members of Sparkbrook Labour party who will soon be voting for their new parliamentary candidate.

Also coincidentally, the Birmingham Tribunal Unit includes among its senior officers Raghib Ahsan, the extreme left-wing councillor for Sparkbrook who has said he will fight for the seat.

THE Westminster Tory candidate in the no-hope Queen's Park ward is one Harry Phibbs, 28-year-old "journalist and publisher".

His election leaflet discloses that he is a governor of the George Eliot primary school and describes Phibbs demurely as having been "active in the Young Conservatives and Conservative Students".

Desperate Conservative student poster

It was Phibbs and his *ilk* whose antics caused Conservative central office to disband the Federation of Conservative Students and replace it with a tamer organisation. And in the week that Nelson Mandela becomes president of South Africa, it should also be recalled that it was Phibbs and FCS cronies who were responsible for printing and distributing Hang Nelson Mandela stickers back in 1983.

A few years later Phibbs used a (subsequently withdrawn) Tory party publication to accuse Harold Macmillan of war crimes.

HOW PARLIAMENT WORKS Pt 94

LAST MONTH, when Labour MP Dale Campbell-Savours and two colleagues went for dinner in the members' dining room they found the tables full — all save the onw traditionally reserved for the government chief whip, Richard Ryder.

While Labour MPs and apoplectic Tories looked on agog, Campbell-Savours and chums sat down. Peter Lilley, the social security secretary, even went over to Campbell-Savours to complain, only to be met with the reply that he and his colleagues liked the table so much they intended to eat at it every night.

For the Tory whips this was no laughing matter. One senior whip asked to speak to Campbell-Savours outside the dining room. There he told the Labour MP that if he and his colleagues, after eating their meal, left the table by 9.10pm he would offer the following deal:

- They would back Campbell-Savours in his campaign to keep Tory MP Alan Duncan (Rutland and Melton) off the procedure committee.
- They would stop blocking Campbell-Savours' election to the select committee on agriculture.

At 9.10pm precisely, Campbell-Savours and colleagues belched and left.

A few days later, on 19 April, government whips let Campbell-Savours' nomination for membership to the agriculture committee go through on the nod. A flabbergasted Duncan, who was present in the chamber, was told to shut up because the chief whip's gastronomic comfort was more important than his political career, which it seems is over.

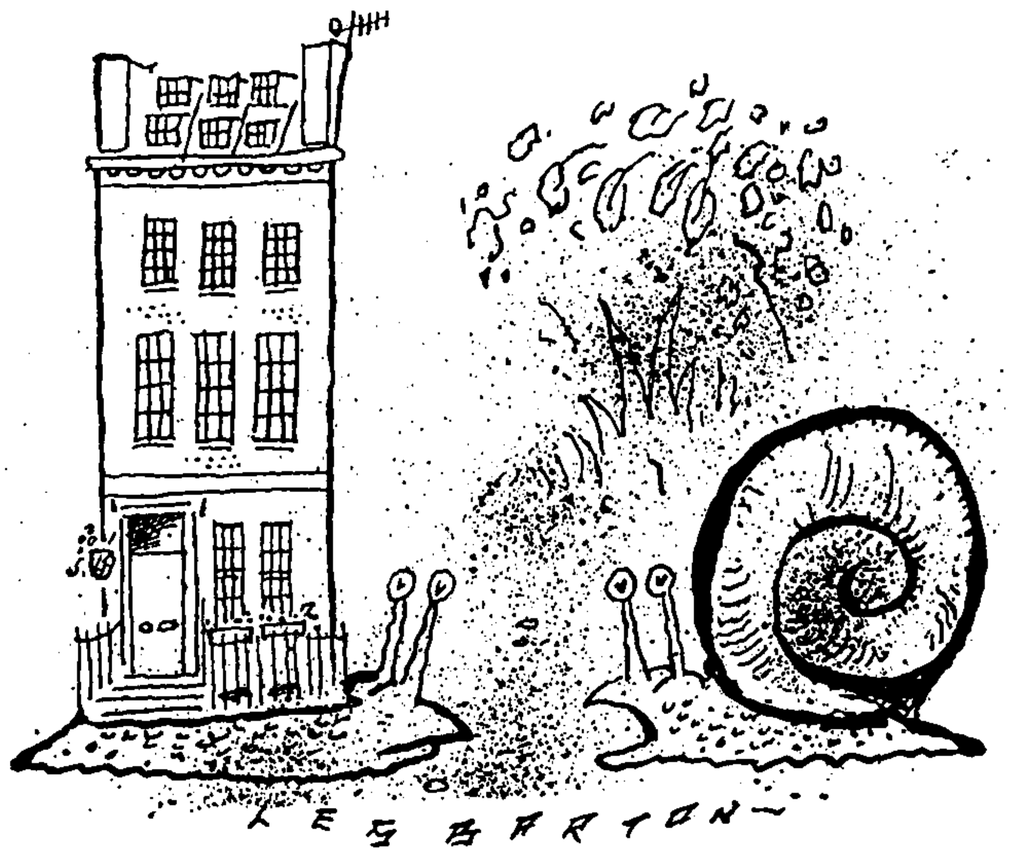
'Backbiter'

NOOKS and CORNERS

SO FAREWELL then, Mappin & Webb... My Lord Palumbo will soon fulfil his dream and have his wicked way with a mere eight listed buildings, clearing the No 1 Poultry site so he can build the late Big Jim Stirling's Wireless Set.

Demolition will begin around 18 May now that all the legal hurdles have apparently been overcome. It might be thought that stonework, ornamental features and fixtures would be worth salvaging from the doomed Victorian buildings, but no: all is to be smashed with ball and chain — there's environmental consciousness for you.

And as for the crucial Mappin & Webb building itself, standing on the corner next to the Mansion House, this has been systematically vandalised over the last few weeks to ensure that, even if work is ever halted, it cannot be restored. Paranoia seems to reign in My Lord Palumbo's camp; for even though they have not yet officially been appointed, the contractors, Laing's, have been trying to stop people taking photographs from the street — until now a completely legal activity in Britain.



"It's architecture – but is it GREAT architecture?"

But the scandals are not over yet, which is why I devote yet more of the *Eye*'s precious pages to this interminable saga. For there is the question of what lies *under* No 1 Poultry. Many spectacular finds of Roman relics have been made in this area — like the Temple of Mithras and the tessellated pavement in Bucklersbury (that ancient street which runs across the development site) — for this was the heart of Londinium. The best finds have been made in the Walbrook, which runs through the site. Evidence suggests that this now-subterranean stream was used for the ritual deposition of objects, and these tend to be well-preserved because the surrounding ground is waterlogged.

As it is known that there was the greatest concentration of stone villas in this part of Londinium, it is highly likely the excavation of the very deep foundations of the Wireless Set will uncover a huge amount of valuable archaeological evidence — evidence which is likely to illuminate the early history of London and be of great interest to the general public. So what provision is being made to allow archaeologists to sift through the thousands of tons of soil which will be excavated over the next year or so? Virtually none.

The poor archaeologists will only be allowed to stand and "observe and record" as the bulldozers and earth excavators make a huge hole in the ground. If they are lucky they can grab the odd tessera or shard they may spot in the jaws of a JCB. All this, of course, is in contradiction to the latest department of the environment planning and policy guidelines on *Archaeology and Planning* (no 16, 1992), which seek to ensure that development sites are properly investigated for archaeological remains, with preservation being the first objective.

What ought to happen has been demonstrated a little further to the north, where the remains of the Roman amphitheatre have been uncovered on the site of the new building proposed for Guildhall Yard. Here, careful archaeological excavations have been going on for 17 months at a cost of £1 million — provided by the developer, the Corporation of London. Much has been discovered. At No 1 Poultry, in contrast, the developers have offered a paltry sum of money and virtually no time for careful investigation. They are getting away with this by sticking to the letter of the inspector's ruling after the second public inquiry. This, which the secretary of state chose to accept, was brief and merely referred to archaeologists being permitted to "observe and record" and not to any essential controlled excavation.

After Palumbo's obsessive 33-year struggle to build a monument to himself next to the Mansion House, such haste might well appear unseemly. But, as I previously reported, his City Acre company is no longer the sole developer and 50 percent of the site is now owned by Dieter Bock's Altstadbau. Herr Bock would seem to have as much regard for London as his compatriot Hermann Goering; and besides, as the Romans never managed to civilise Germany, perhaps he is not interested in Roman remains. But surely My Lord Palumbo, that conspicuous patron of the arts and late chairman of the Arts Council, ought to be. After all, his recent forebears hailed from Amalfi.

While the Museum of London and English Heritage have been trying to negotiate with the developers to ensure a proper archaeological investigation of the site, Herr Bock and My Lord Palumbo are "uncontactable". Palumbo is said to be in America, no doubt escaping his odious and litigious son James. But that is no excuse. "Archaeology is not architecture," as Sir Gilbert Scott remarked. No, indeed. But if it was a scandal that successive governments manipulated the process of two public inquiries so that listed buildings will be destroyed to oblige this generous donor to Conservative party funds, it is also a scandal that he is now being allowed — contrary to the public interest — to despoil what is likely to be the richest and most rewarding archaeological site in London.

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

It will not have escaped readers' notice that today is the anniversary of the Edict of Nantes.

JEREMY PAXMAN
Daily Telegraph

Peter and Trudy Johnson-Lenz are recognised internationally as groupware pioneers. When they coined the term "Groupware" in 1978, they defined it as a whole system 'of intentional group processes plus supporting software'. More recently, they have argued that groupware is computer-mediated culture and reflects the worldview of its designers. In their view, if groupware is to support the fundamental transformation that organisations and societies are experiencing, it must embody a post-mechanistic sustainable worldview.

Flyer for 'Groupware frontiers: co-operative working in the 21st century' conference, London

I can see why people bake their own bread. It feels better to me than simply cooking, almost like I have just given birth.

NIGEL SLATER
Observer Life Magazine

Tree of Life, Tree of Death
The Circus, Bath, 11am, free.
Part healing ceremony, part art event — a meditation on the twin nature of trees on the Circus's famous ley-line. Self-styled S&M Yogi Hagbard Celine will be nailing himself to one tree in commemoration of Good Friday, while Sister Rosetta Stone of the Sublime Order of the Green Light will be embracing the other trees in the circle so as to balance the energy and heal Bath's prevailing materialistic tendencies. Collection in aid of The Sanctuary for Sick Trees, Leigh on Mendip.

Venue Magazine

[Dennis] Cooper's writing spirals as tightly as DNA around death, perversity, tenderness and desire. Its intensity and excess stem from his attempts to find language that will encompass perverse eroticism and transcendence within a world in which feelings has [sic] been numbed. He charts contemporary sensibility as it engages with extreme taboo and conjoins our mediatised world with that of erotic literary art. He shows us Eros and Thanatos slam-dancing on MTV.

ELIZABETH YOUNG
Guardian

Specifically, I try to bring to a role a focus of the consciousness of the universality we all share, by a re-arrangement of my own personal experience which comes from a philosophy of understanding that's about oneness, that we're all on this earth together and that we are all, in essence, the same being.

BETTY BUCKLEY
The Independent

Allison Pearson and other British television critics seem unfamiliar with a key term in the vocabulary of MTV/Channel 4's *Beavis and Butt-Head*. It's not "woosie" but "wussy", a combination of "wimp" and "pussy", which rhymes with the latter. The term is invariably used as a noun in variant forms, ie "what a wuss". It is mildly euphemistic, closer to "wally" than "wanker" in effect, and, like these cognates, reserved exclusively to describe other males.

PROF. ELAINE SHOWALTER
Letter to Independent on Sunday

CONTRIBUTORS: A. Non, S. Kirk, S. Redfearn & L. Freeman, C. Zollman, N. Richardson, P. Newman, M. Heath.

£10 paid for entries

TV

Eurotrash

(Channel 4)

IMAGE is all in television: acquire the right one and you can get away with anything. Channel 4, for instance, is still widely seen as British TV's sanctuary of the alternative: where long, poorly made documentaries on union rights are cheerfully shown in prime time, and ratings are regarded with lofty contempt.

Channel 4 is the station that doesn't care what people think. It's the station with integrity. It's the station with a beard.

The only problem is that all this stopped two years ago when Channel 4 was told it had to start selling its own advertising. Overnight the station had to pay its way, and before you could say "market forces" the beard was shaved and any notion of being "alternative" was thrown out of the window. Now Channel 4 is just as ratings-crazed as everyone else, and in some cases, possibly more so.

One of those cases is **Eurotrash**, the sharp, thrusting young magazine show that greets Channel 4's less sober viewers on Friday nights when they stumble home from the boozer. Now in its second series, *Eurotrash* proffers a weekly selection of wacky and indeed zany stories from mainland Europe, all tied together by the scripted byplay of its two presenters: the fashion designer Jean-Paul Gaultier and *Rapido*'s Antoine de Caunes.

If the show attracted any attention during an otherwise uneventful first run, it was because of the presenters, whose extraordinary accents revealed Peter Sellers' Inspector Clouseau to have been a masterpiece of pinpoint satire rather than the silly joke we thought it was at the time.

But for this second series, the ante has been upped considerably. The two presenters still drivel away harmlessly, trading on their hilarious personae (de Caunes always wears a suit; Gaultier is as camp as Pontins); but the stories have become more and more extreme, showing a notable bias towards bottom-related activities. In the past few weeks, regular viewers have been treated to:

- A visit to Berlin by Lily Savage to investigate an all male nude spring-cleaning service.
- A survey of Sweden's more interesting lavatories, including a ground-breaking new communal one (cut to shot of fat Swedes with their trousers down).
- The 20-stone Austrian performance artist who lies blindfolded and naked on a mattress and invites visitors to have sex with him. Photos of his last sexual act, five years before with a guardsman, are prominently displayed, should anyone need further encouragement. No one during filming actually acceded to his wish, although a young couple did pleasure him briefly.
- The making of a promotional film for Catalonia by a young avant garde director, whose predilection for naked bodies, dead animals and a masturbation machine made out of cows' tongues means the film will never now be shown — other than of course on *Eurotrash*.
- The German gigolos with the money back guarantee.
- French porn holidays: pay your money, perform for the cameras, take a video home afterwards.
- The world's rudest restaurant (what they do with a bottle of champagne doesn't bear thinking about).

A certain consistency of tone can be spotted here, and indeed *Eurotrash* makes no bones about its determinedly lowbrow approach to European culture. If there are breasts to be wiggled, genitals to be dangled, or the word "penis" to be translated into Turkish, *Eurotrash* will happily do it.

What is remarkable, though, is the way Channel 4 gets away with it. If *Eurotrash* were on the BBC, backbench MPs would be foaming at the mouth and John Birt would be hauled before select committees to justify his actions. But backbench MPs don't watch Channel 4. So instead of exciting howls of tabloid rage, the station cheerfully broadcasts what may be the most tawdry, nipple-heavy, genitally fixated, excrement-encrusted entertainment series yet seen on British TV — while retaining its reputation at the vanguard of innovative quality programming.

As Jean Paul Gaultier would no doubt say: "Bottoms up!"

'Couch Potato'

MEDIA NEWS

GOOD TO SEE John Birt continuing with his mission to explain by suppressing the *Panorama* programme on Westminster council before the local election.

The manner of the suppression was typical of the man.

Everyone knew the whole point of the programme was to make certain facts about Westminster available to the public before the vote. The programme was almost completed by the end of March, and it conformed strictly to the representation of the people act.

The first proposed transmission date was 11 April; then 18 April; then it was finally settled as 25 April. All this was well known to the director-general, who could have called for the programme at any time. Instead he adopted a familiar tactic: doing nothing.

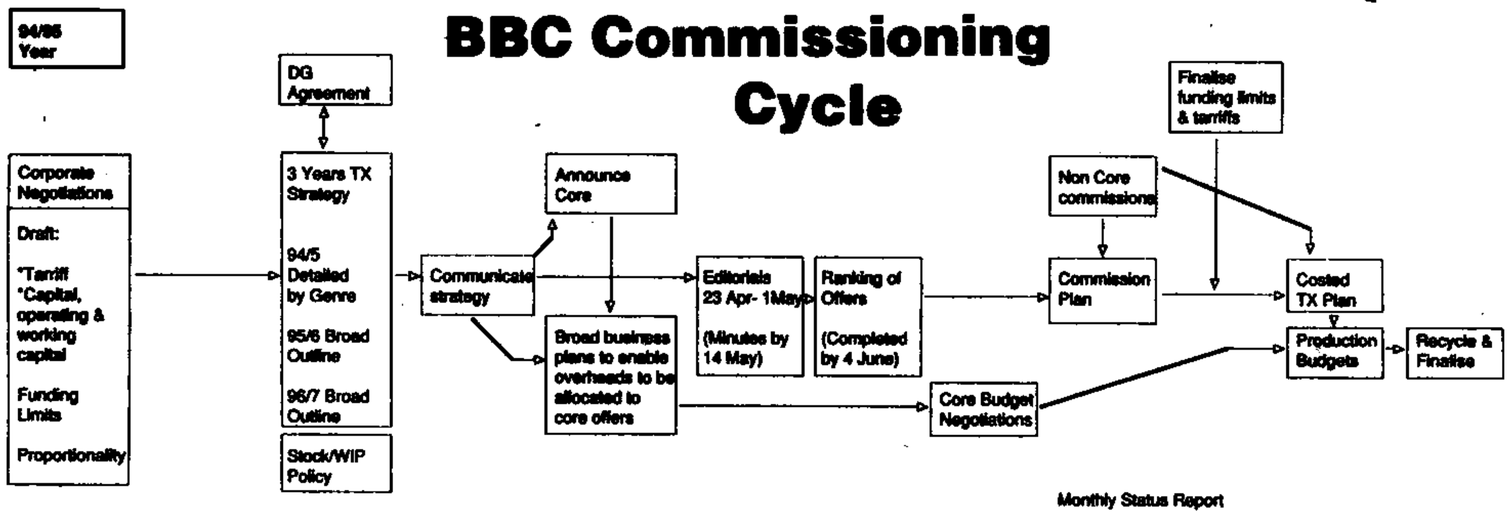
On Friday 22 April he announced that he had not made a decision and could not do so until after 25 April. Since the only other Monday before the elections was a bank holiday, on which there was no *Panorama*, this decisive indecision effectively banned the programme until after the people of Westminster had voted.

ITV executives are still determined to rid themselves of the detested remnant of the pre-1990 broadcasting act days — *News At Ten*.

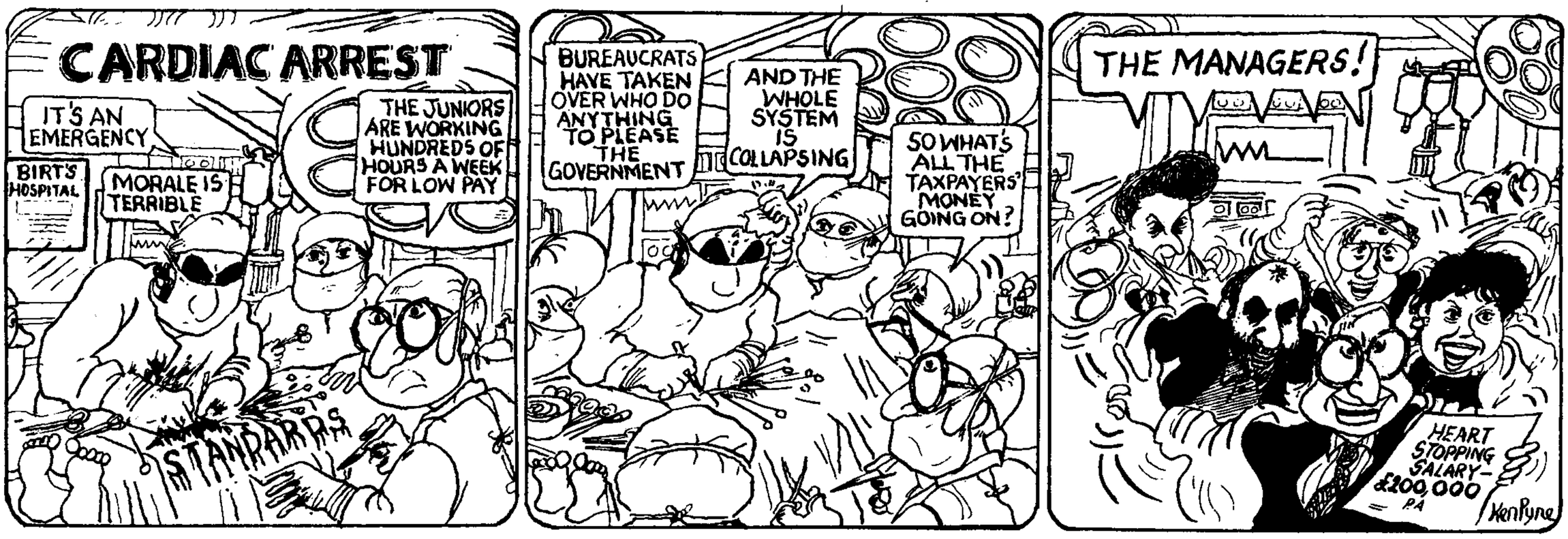
The timing of ITN's flagship adversely affects advertising sales and must be changed, apparently. Even though most ITV contractors will be in breach of their franchise agreements if they make the move, a concerted push by controllers can be expected this summer while the Commons is in recess.

An earlier attempt to reschedule was rebuffed after opposition from politicians, notably John Major. Suggestions that Major's willingness to come to ITN's defence again may have diminished after Michael Brunson's leaking of the prime minister's less than flattering view of cabinet dissidents are clearly ridiculous: as has been repeatedly pointed out, Brunson was not the source of the leak.

BIRTSPEAK



BBC Directive


CARDIAC ARREST
IT'S AN EMERGENCY
BIRT'S HOSPITAL
MORALE IS TERRIBLE
THE JUNIORS ARE WORKING HUNDREDS OF HOURS A WEEK FOR LOW PAY
STANDARDS
BUREAUCRATS HAVE TAKEN OVER WHO DO ANYTHING TO PLEASE THE GOVERNMENT
AND THE WHOLE SYSTEM IS COLLAPSING
SO WHAT'S ALL THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY GOING ON?
THE MANAGERS!
HEART STOPPING SALARY- £200,000 PA
Ken Pyne

THE doddering bigwigs at the Radio Authority are currently considering what to do with the 105-108 MHZ section of the FM waveband.

The options are to give the whole of it to Richard Branson for his Virgin station, or to allow hundreds of small community stations on air. Public consultation ended on 22 April.

Virgin's campaign for the FM frequencies has included regular propaganda broadcasts on Virgin 1215 and huge promotion in Virgin Megastores. If Richard Branson owned newspapers, it's a safe bet that they would be pushing Virgin's interests just as the *Daily Ruperts* at Wapping have ceaselessly hyped their master's satellite channels.

But Branson has also attracted some weighty outside support. On 18 April it was announced that "a report published this week by independent business consultants the Henley Centre overwhelmingly supports the use of the 105-108 MHZ radio frequencies for a commercial national pop/rock station."

The Henley Centre's press release was followed by a series of phone calls to media hacks trying to place news stories or features about this piece of research.

Who commissioned the Henley Centre's "independent" report? Why, Virgin 1215.

POOR, sozzled Simon Regan, editor of the desperate *Scallywag* magazine, is still struggling to bring his long-suffering brain into focus.

Last month Regan's mag accused Alan Beck, a lecturer at Kent University, of raping young boys from a children's home in Leicestershire. As we pointed out in our last issue, the befuddled hack had apparently confused Alan Beck with Frank Beck, who did indeed molest children in Leicestershire and is now serving a life sentence for the offence.

When our piece appeared, Regan sent us an illiterate fax denying that he had got the wrong Beck.

Instead, he has lurched back into the fray in the new issue of *Scallywag*, repeating the claim that Alan Beck "savagely abused a boy... at his Leicestershire home." In fact, Beck has never had a house in Leicestershire.

MEANWHILE Regan has filled two pages of his organ with an article reminiscing about his days as a hard-hitting royal reporter.

"I never belonged to the rat pack," he writes. "They rarely dared expose any member of the family to ridicule... But, during the Seventies, I made a great deal of money out of reporting the Royals — my way. And that was no holds barred."

Presumably Regan hopes no one will recall what he actually did write about the royals in the 70s. His greatest achievement was a book called *Charles: The Clown Prince*, published by Methuen in 1977, which was a sycophantic hymn of praise to the Prince of Wales's sense of humour.

Even the great Sylvie Krin could hardly have bettered Regan's description of Charles's birth: "The church bells of the nation reverberated through the joyous streets. A King had indeed been born." Regan continued: "It was no ordinary family. They led most of their lives under a microscope. But because they are the kind of people they are Charles has managed to emerge as a tough, well-balanced, intelligent and humorous young man."

The prince's siblings and parents got much the same adulatory treatment: "Charles and Andrew have their mother's sense of humour coupled with the Duke's high spirits... Anne is very much Daddy's girl... Edward is his mother's son. Warm, quiet, composed and blessed with a gentle humour. It is because of this that they are such a well-orientated and happy family."

If that is what Regan considers to be "no holds barred" reporting, no wonder the fellow is in such a perpetual muddle.

HYPEWATCH No 1: SIR TIM BELL

SIR TIM BELL is almost always described as a "PR guru", and his supposed skill at gilding the image of politicians and large companies has made him a multi-millionaire.

Any ambitious youngsters who wish to go into the public relations business will want to know the secrets of his success. And for their benefit the *Eye* has compiled this list of recent triumphs.

Pre-1990: During the Thatcher years, Bell is best-known as the prime minister's favourite PR adviser. But plenty of other people are keen to obtain the benefit of his services, too.

In the miner's strike, for instance, he is recruited to make the coal board's dismal chairman, Ian McGregor, more attractive to the public. His main proposal is that McGregor should wear light suits to hide his dandruff. McGregor's reputation is, alas, not discernibly enhanced.

Bell is also hired by Ernest Saunders of Guinness, just as the department of trade begins its investigation into the Guinness takeover of Distillers. Saunders is eventually sent to jail for fraud.

Another beneficiary of his advice is Crown Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, who wants to restore the Yugoslav monarchy. The country plunges into a long and bloody war instead.

Yet another client is Octav Botnar, head of Nissan UK. After hiring Bell, Botnar is accused of defrauding the British government of £97 million. He flees to Switzerland, resisting Inspector Knacker's invitation to return for questioning.

During this period Bell also acts for the Reichmann brothers, the owners of Olympia & York — whose reputation duly takes a nosedive because of the Canary Wharf *debacle*.

And, of course, Bell acts as a spokesman for Mark Thatcher. Under Sir Tim's expert guidance, Maggie's boy receives nothing but bad publicity.

1990: During Chile's first democratic elections in more than a decade, Bell is employed to promote General Pinochet's favoured candidate: ex-finance minister Herman Buchi. Buchi gets 28.7 per cent of vote; as against 53.8 per cent for the winner.

1991: With help from Bell, Mrs Thatcher is given a job with the American tobacco firm Philip Morris. Her appointment is widely criticised.

Meanwhile, Bell receives a letter from another client, Lord Hanson, complaining about the company's poor press coverage. "It's not for us to tell you how to do your job," Hanson writes, "but it is up to me to judge the results. I think we're entitled to better results. We've put our faith in your ability to SELL Hanson to your contacts."

July 1992: David Mellor asks Bell to help him brazen out the Antonia de Sancha affair. "If I can get Mellor through this," Sir Tim boasts, "I will make him the first Tory minister to survive a sex scandal." He persuades the embattled minister to pose for a happy family photograph — which turns into a PR disaster. He then arranges for Mellor to appear on *News at Ten* and *Newsnight*; the minister's arrogant performance provokes many backbench Tories into demanding his resignation, which they duly get.

September 1992: Bell is hired by the Turkish government to drum up favourable publicity. In the months that follow, there is little sign of any.

January 1993: Bell is drafted in by British Airways after the airline's disastrous £3.6 million high court libel defeat at the hands of Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic. With Bell in charge of spin-doctoring, BA endures many months of disastrous publicity.

March 1993: When John Birt's unusual tax arrangements are exposed, Sir Tim is wheeled out to put the case for the BBC director-general. Birt's reputation goes from bad to worse. (For his efforts at the BBC, it is revealed, Bell is paid £350,000 a year.)

November 1993: Sir Tim Bell flies to Johannesburg to meet President de Klerk, who has signed him up to mastermind the National Party's general election campaign. The National Party loses.

February 1994: Amid the uproar over the Pergau dam scandal, it is disclosed that Sir Tim was the PR consultant to one of the companies which benefited from the deal, GEC, as well as to the Malaysian government, the Malaysian high commission and the Malaysian tourist commission. (He is also, of course, an adviser to Lady Thatcher, who signed the memorandum of undertaking with the Malaysians in 1988. Oh, and he advised Dato Tan Sri Arumugam, a go-between for Malaysia and Britain.) Meanwhile, he continues to act as a personal adviser to Dr Mahathir, the Malaysian PM — whose image promptly takes a fearful battering in the British press.

April 1994: Bell is paid £62,000 of taxpayers' money to tell the government how to mark the 50th anniversary of D-Day. His proposal for a "fun day" — street parties, spam-fritter frying contests and the like — is condemned by D-Day veterans and Dame Vera Lynn. Sir Tim's scheme is abandoned, amid universally scathing publicity for the government, his client.

And finally: Last year one of Bell's clients, Crescent Petroleum, brought an unsuccessful libel action against Alan George, a freelance journalist. Unabashed, Sir Tim's company Lowe Bell Communications faxed the *Eye* a statement complaining that Crescent was "the victim of a campaign of smear and innuendo".

Alas! Last week the *Eye* received a grovelling letter from Sir Tim's right-hand man, Stephen Sherbourne, a former political secretary to Margaret Thatcher. "On 16 March last year we sent to you a press release on behalf of Crescent Petroleum Company International Limited which referred to a smear campaign being conducted against Crescent... we did not intend this release to refer to Dr George or suggest that he was in any way involved in such a campaign against Crescent." Oh yes? Why, then, did the original statement actually cite an article written by Alan George for the *Observer*?

Once again, Sir Tim ends up looking like a chump. Still, as long as the money keeps rolling in, he needn't worry unduly. Treble helpings of spam fritters all round!

MORE HYPE

FOR ONCE a *Daily Mail* editorial — headed "The Failure of Hype" — almost got it right.

"Barbra Streisand has just performed in a concert hyped beyond the wildest shores of absurdity. Every weapon in the public relations arsenal was deployed to convince us of the cosmic nature of her show," it noted before gloating over mixed reviews and "touts reduced to offering £260 seats for £20."

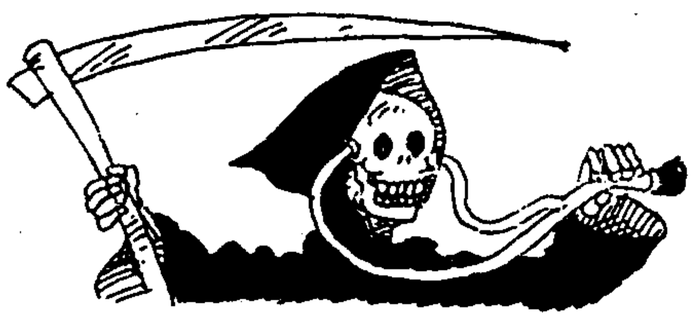
The point it did not make, however, was that the main "weapon deployed" was none other than the *Daily Mail* and its roly-poly showbiz correspondent, Baz Bamigboye.

Details of Streisand's tour were first revealed in his weekly Hot Press Handouts (*Shurely "Gossip"?*) column. He followed this on 11 March hailing "one of the most extraordinary deals in British showbusiness history" (by his old friend Harvey Goldsmith, *natch*) and explaining that "tickets for two shows go on sale today and the 24,000 seats available now should be snapped up within hours... If you want to see Streisand, you shouldn't delay in calling the following numbers..."

As the day neared, Baz took virtually a full page on 16 April to promote the singer's merchandise. "The seats cost up to £260 each and already some are changing hands at ten times their face value," he began, before helping flog £13 posters, £10 mugs and £15 baseball caps.

Alas! The *Mail*'s critic Jack Tinker was one of the many unimpressed by the performance. and a separate article headed "Streisand Touts Get Their Fingers Burned " told a cautionary tale, reporting that "the great Barbra Streisand hype backfired last night as frantic touts desperately tried to sell tickets for her concert below face value... One groaned: 'We can't give them away'."

The author of the piece? None other than Baz "Hot Gossip" Bamigboye.



DOING THE ROUNDS

FOUR hard-pressed ophthalmologists at Havering hospitals trust have been lobbying for a much needed extra consultant for more than two years.

Chief executive Stephen Eames, proud recipient of an overwhelming vote of no confidence from consultants at **Oldchurch hospital** in 1992 (*Eyes passim*), agreed in theory and money was provided to fund the post. But it has yet to be filled.

Instead Mr Eames decided to increase their workload with an additional contract from **South Essex HA**. When targets were understandably not met, Eames and chairman Geoff Jennings threatened the consultants with the axe. Three promptly resigned, bringing the number of consultants who have left under Eames' stewardship to five.

Eames then employed two unaccredited locums to tackle the work, despite warnings of dire medico-legal consequences from staff and an external assessor, Brian Beveridge, of **Whipps Cross hospital**. Following a series of "complications", one locum departed and partially sighted patients are having to travel to London or Southend for operations.

Eames, who is staying put in his newly refurbished office, now plans to close Oldchurch casualty department despite the protests of local residents and Tory MP Sir Michael Neubert.

CON-SULTANCY NEWS

● ALL CHANGE at **Central Middlesex hospital NHS trust**, where chief executive Andy Black has resigned to start his own consultancy. His first contract is as an adviser for the redevelopment programme... at **Central Middlesex hospital**.

● THE **East Surrey Learning Disability and Mental Health Service** celebrated its new found trust status with a circular forbidding employees from contacting the media without managerial approval.

It's also been looking for a medical director, with Dr V.R. "Ranji" Pandita-Gunawardena, a generously proportioned lady of Sri Lankan extraction, emerging as the doctors' favourite choice. The trust board is less sure that she fits in with its "image" and has commissioned Insight Management Development Ltd to send an "image survey" to all other consultants, to be filled in "as fully and frankly as possible".

Opening questions include: "Is Dr Pandita interesting to be with, neatly turned out, aloof, easily swayed, unsure of herself, flustered, difficult to read, listen to and please, reserved, laid back, approachable, humorous and unsociable?"

Consultants are then invited to speculate as to how she could "best improve her image".

● Meanwhile **Cambridge and Huntingdon health commission** has appointed a £45,000 director of public affairs to explain *its* decisions to the public.

CHEAT'S CHARTER

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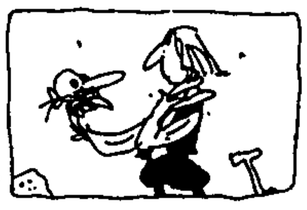

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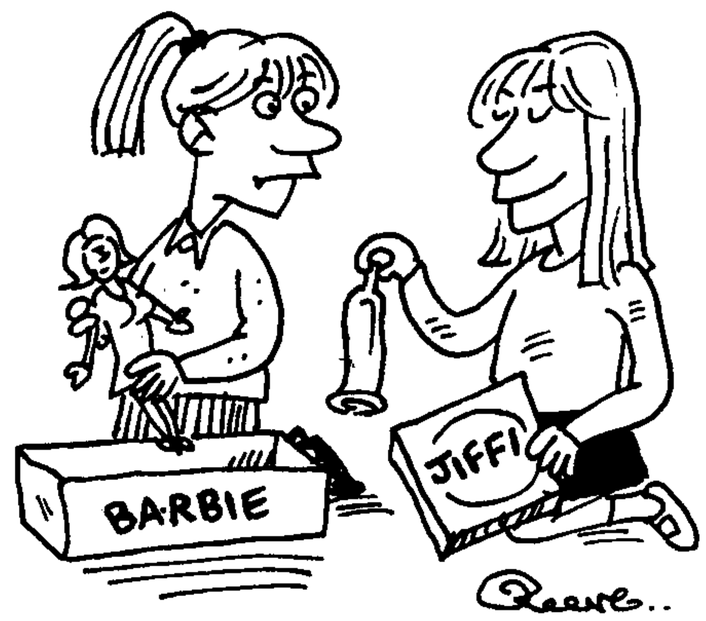

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Yours etc,
P.R.R.,
London SE24.

council meetings, despite officially sitting as an independent.

Amalu is now standing as a Democratic Labour candidate, whatever that is, claiming that she needs four more years to sort out the borough's housing, install central heating and double-glazing into every council home and "banish cockroaches for ever".

Then there are ex-Labour-turned-Conservative councillor Manibai Patel; and Labour, well, Conservative councillor Harshad Barot. Both were elected four years ago on the Labour ticket but are standing as Tories this month. Not bad if you consider that when Barot's Asian Professionals Association owed the council thousands of pounds in unpaid loans the Tories denounced him as unfit to hold public office.

TOWER HAMLETS

STRANGE how councillors in Tower Hamlets have been so keen to pursue rent refuseniks in the run up to the elections.

In Poplar Neighbourhood, for instance, a crackdown brought a number of defaulters before Bow county court, including one Barry Blandford.

Happily, however, Poplar dropped its case when Mr Blandford agreed to repay — otherwise he might not have been able to continue as the local Liberal Democrat councillor and candidate.

Another Liberal hopeful in Poplar, Terry Stacey, has been having electoral problems of his own. Stacey mistakenly registered his father to vote in the highly-marginal East India ward, even though Stacey *père* is also registered in the house where he lives (several miles away in Millwall) — a Liberal no-hope area.

Stacey's inadvertent enthusiasm to increase Liberal support in East India of course had nothing to do with his candidature in the ward.

WOLVERHAMPTON

AFTER the last *Eye* reported how a girl, now aged 13, had been working as a prostitute while in the "care" of a children's home in Wednesfield, the Wolverhampton social services department has proudly revealed that it had *another* 12-year-old in the trade at the same time.

However, another girl in council care proved an embarrassingly late starter: she was 16 before she turned to prostitution.

Both began while living at home but their careers really took off when they were taken into care and put in children's homes. The 12-year-old even travelled to Birmingham and Walsall to bring badly needed cash back to Wolverhampton's deprived children's homes.

NUCLEAR NEWS

LORD Marshall of Goring, ex-boss of the Central Electricity Generating Board, said on BBC2 recently that during the miners' strike he told Margaret Thatcher: " 'I guarantee you we will keep the lights on.' I didn't actually know we would but we had to stop her interfering."

He operated the same policy of unfounded reassurance, to stop the public interfering, when he became chairman of WANO, the World Association of Nuclear Operatives, which receives reports from power stations everywhere about nasty mishaps.

He disclosed that WANO's rules required every incident to be reported "in the confidence that it will not be publicised". He said reports [plural] "land on my desk every day". As he worked a five-day week, that meant a minimum of 520 a year. An "incident" is something which might have significance for reactor safety.

WANO has since followed its own policy of silence and is rarely heard of. Marshall has left the chair and is now called its ambassador, in which role he travels the world exuding unfounded confidence. He once expressed confidence in the Russian RBMK, the type which collapsed at Chernobyl.

THE imminent reopening of the Sizewell inquiry — to comply with the law — is sending tremors through the nuclear industry because the grounds on which permission was originally granted (cheapness and electricity demand) no longer apply.

The judgment in the Thorp v. Greenpeace case means Nuclear Electric must "justify" Sizewell's benefits, balancing radioactive discharge against net benefits. The government is thus planning to set up another phoney "public inquiry" (in secret) to cover itself in case it has to explain to a judge once again what it is doing.

Nuclear Electric said last month it would deliver its case to the government "within the next 10 days" but, like the rest of Sizewell, it failed to meet the deadline.

The original Sizewell inquiry, expected to last six weeks, took two-and-a-quarter years. It decided Sizewell B should be built because in the view of the inspector, Sir Frank Layfield, and his economics assessor, Sir Christopher Foster, it was the cheapest way to produce electricity. In addition, it would be needed to meet "the energy gap": the lights would go out by the mid-1990s (that's now) without it.

The cost, put at £1.2 billion, has since risen to £2.03 billion in 1987 money (£2.5 billion in today's prices). It is 40 percent over budget in real terms. The science policy research unit at Sussex university calculates that it will cost the country £1 million a day (£362 million a year) for each of the 35 years it is designed to function. And instead of an energy gap we now have an energy glut. One other problem: the loading of fuel was supposed to have started last September, later amended to December. It has still not started.

"Hi honey – I'm Home Office"

DOWN ON THE FARM

THE council of ministers took another lurch to the edge of the abyss last week when talks in Brussels on next year's milk quotas collapsed in what was described as "total shambles".

At stake was the commission's highly unpopular proposal that all EC milk producing countries should take a 1 per cent quota drop next year. For Britain, this is more than insane: we are already having to *import* milk to keep our cheese factories going.

To rub salt in the wound, it was also proposed that Italy, which only grudgingly introduced quotas last year — despite the system having started in 1984 — should be allowed to keep its 900,000 tonne extra quota which she was given last year as a reward for obeying the rules a mere eight years late.

It was left to the Greek presidency to frame a compromise proposal after bilateral talks with each minister. Typical of the cock-ups for which the Greeks are becoming famous, they somehow failed to counter the unified opposition of all EC members with the exception of Germany and Portugal, against further quota cuts. Their offer was, er, a 1 per cent cut, with Italy allowed to keep its 900,000 tonne extra quota — the same as the original unpopular proposal.

Among others, British farmers — for once aided by a robust Gillian Shephard, our farming person — are refusing to accept the deal. They complain that it is "disgraceful" that Italy should be rewarded for running roughshod over the system, while the law-abiding Brits, always accused of being anti-European, end up losing out.

But if the spaghetti belt knows anything, it knows how to milk the EC cow: witness the recent arrest of Pasquale Casilo, who controlled a third of Italy's grain exports. Otherwise known as the "King of Grain", this enterprising Euro citizen has been accused of fraudulently skimming more than £150 million in agriculture subsidies from the munificent common agricultural policy (CAP) to add to the mere £59 million ripped off by Italians in general in 1992, the last full year of accounting.

What Britain has still not grasped is that to play the *communautaire* game is to play the last great mug's game in Europe. The only way to profit from a wholly corrupt system is to fight for a place at the trough. After all, second only to Italy, the biggest CAP fraudsters are the ever-so-correct Germans.

Better still, and as an increasing number of UK farmers are suggesting, la Shephard should tell the Greeks to put their quotas where the sun don't shine and pull the UK out of the CAP altogether.

LOVERS of hazelnut yoghurt, or even John West salmon, will remember the scourge of botulism, the food-poisoning which works on the nervous system to cause almost certain death to untreated sufferers. But the death of more than 40 cattle in Wales from botulism reported last month was from neither of these delectable products — but from chicken carcasses.

This highlights a less than salubrious habit of intensive broiler rearers, some of whom are experiencing more than 20 per cent mortality among their birds, 20,000 or more of which may be kept in each shed.

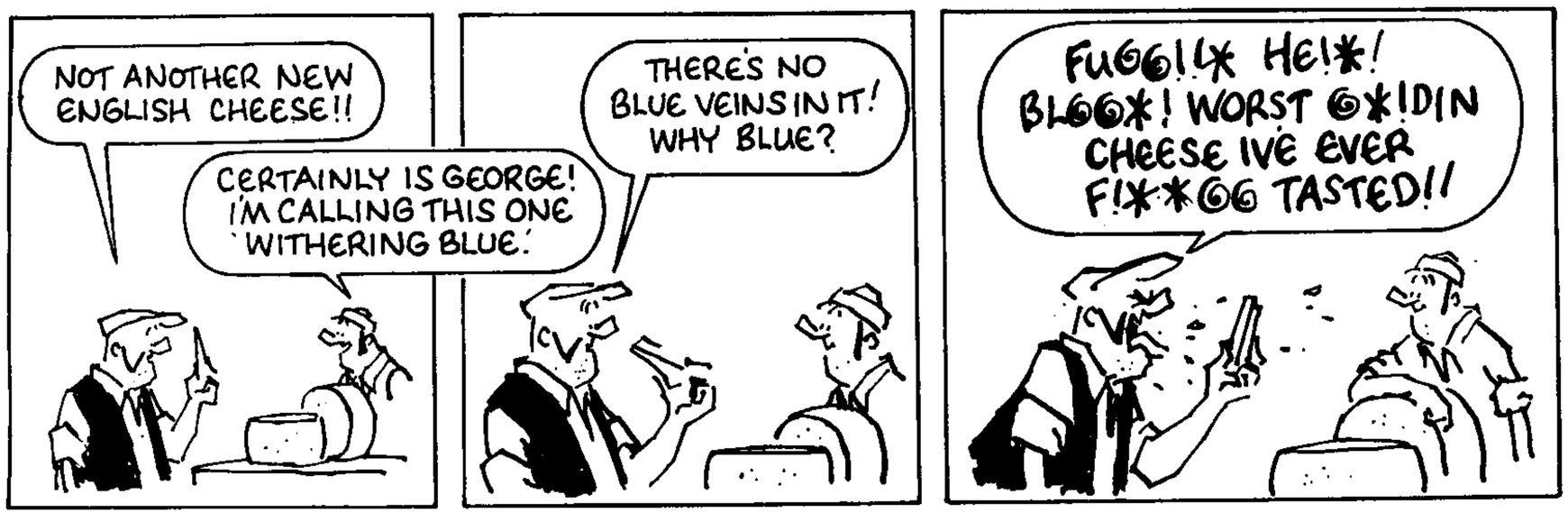
Only a proportion of corpses are pulled out of the houses. The rest fall into the wood shaving used as "litter" which, with the manure, is dumped on fields as cheap fertilizer. It seems this highly infective material was incorporated into silage bales, which gave rise to the death of the Welsh cattle.

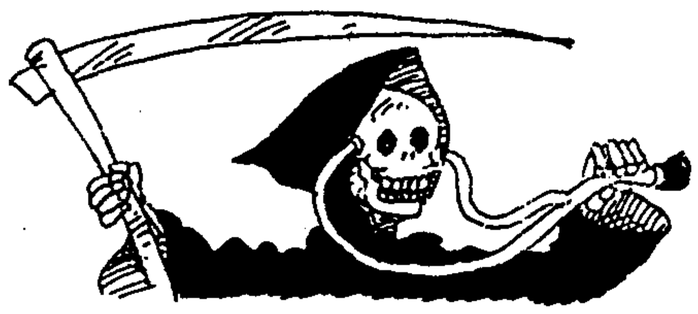
What is puzzling is that neither the ministry of agriculture nor the zealous pollution watchdogs, the National Rivers Authority, seem to be concerned about the dumping. The hazards — including botulism, salmonella, listeria and other harmful bugs — are well known. What are the officials playing at?

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


NOT ANOTHER NEW ENGLISH CHEESE!!
CERTAINLY IS GEORGE! I'M CALLING THIS ONE 'WITHERING BLUE'.
THERE'S NO BLUE VEINS IN IT! WHY BLUE?
FUGG!LY HE!*! BLGG*! WORST G*!DIN CHEESE IVE EVER F!**GG TASTED!!



DOING THE ROUNDS

FOUR hard-pressed ophthalmologists at Havering hospitals trust have been lobbying for a much needed extra consultant for more than two years.

Chief executive Stephen Eames, proud recipient of an overwhelming vote of no confidence from consultants at **Oldchurch hospital** in 1992 (*Eyes passim*), agreed in theory and money was provided to fund the post. But it has yet to be filled.

Instead Mr Eames decided to increase their workload with an additional contract from **South Essex HA**. When targets were understandably not met, Eames and chairman Geoff Jennings threatened the consultants with the axe. Three promptly resigned, bringing the number of consultants who have left under Eames' stewardship to five.

Eames then employed two unaccredited locums to tackle the work, despite warnings of dire medico-legal consequences from staff and an external assessor, Brian Beveridge, of **Whipps Cross hospital**. Following a series of "complications", one locum departed and partially sighted patients are having to travel to London or Southend for operations.

Eames, who is staying put in his newly refurbished office, now plans to close Oldchurch casualty department despite the protests of local residents and Tory MP Sir Michael Neubert.

CON-SULTANCY NEWS

● ALL CHANGE at **Central Middlesex hospital NHS trust**, where chief executive Andy Black has resigned to start his own consultancy. His first contract is as an adviser for the redevelopment programme... at **Central Middlesex hospital**.

● **THE East Surrey Learning Disability and Mental Health Service** celebrated its new found trust status with a circular forbidding employees from contacting the media without managerial approval.

It's also been looking for a medical director, with Dr V.R. "Ranji" Pandita-Gunawardena, a generously proportioned lady of Sri Lankan extraction, emerging as the doctors' favourite choice. The trust board is less sure that she fits in with its "image" and has commissioned Insight Management Development Ltd to send an "image survey" to all other consultants, to be filled in "as fully and frankly as possible".

Opening questions include: "Is Dr Pandita interesting to be with, neatly turned out, aloof, easily swayed, unsure of herself, flustered, difficult to read, listen to and please, reserved, laid back, approachable, humorous and unsociable?"

Consultants are then invited to speculate as to how she could "best improve her image".

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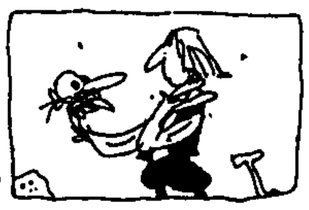

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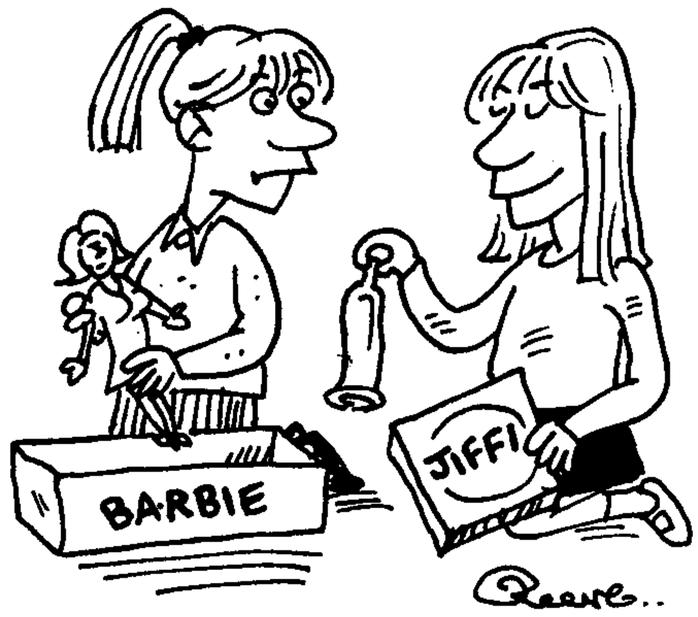

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Yours etc,
P.R.R.,
London SE24.

Doctor's orders

Sir,

You miserable bastards. Why didn't you print the 0839 numbers out of my column in full? Do you have any idea how expensive Bentleys are to run?

Yours,
VERNON COLEMAN,
The People.

Sir,

Congratulations. In your issue 844 you have proved conclusively that you can make anyone into a "villain" by selectively printing certain parts of their work.

To be quite honest you are no better than the people you "expose" on your pages. I used to think that you did a good job, but now that I know the truth behind the story that you have written I am afraid I can pay you no more credence than to the gutter press that you so like to vilify.

I am referring to (if you haven't gathered by the notepaper) to your HACKWATCH *on Dr Vernon Coleman. Yes of course he writes about sex in the* PEOPLE *). What else would anyone expect to find in that paper? However you have omitted the hundreds of letters offering sensible advice and encouragement, and what about all the articles attacking the government — especially in the area of health care? Don't these count?*

Yes he does have phone lines that make him SOME money (not as much as you would like us to believe when you take into account the cut the telephone company and the PEOPLE *take) but the money is all spent on Dr Coleman's campaign against animal abuse. What do you spend your salary on? I am enclosing our newsletter and leaflet to show you that Dr Coleman has other work than writing letters about men wearing women's underwear. On Saturday he spoke at the World Day for Lab Animals rally and had two standing ovations. The money he makes from the* PEOPLE *supports this work (every penny we collect goes towards the fight against animal abuse. We do not take a penny for expenses from the donations) and I am proud to be working alongside him.*

Yours,
GILL REDFEARN,
Plan 2000.

Sir,

In the latest issue (844) the article Dr Vernon Coleman's Casebook was disgusting. I felt that while you appeared to be showing him up you were doing the same thing that he was. It would have been much better not to have printed it at all. Printing it served no proper purpose nor useful purpose.

The only thing printing such dirt may do is lead some pathetic people to buy the Sunday People. In my view, for what it's worth, Dr Coleman's article, call it what you will, has nothing to do with medicine.

Please don't give him space in your magazine again.

Hopefully,
MRS M. MAHER,
Dublin.

PS: I may not read PRIVATE EYE *again.*

Gross!

Sir,

I very much hope that I was not alone in feeling rather taken aback when I read (Funny Old World, 843) that the **diameter** *of the average European organ is no less than 5.6cm. This didn't seem all that large until I checked my ruler (yes... I said "ruler"). And what makes it worse is that the Germans are challenging the figures as being too small.*

I know that size isn't everything, but could you reassure your male readers that this is either a misprint or an error, either by you or by the original publication.

Yours inadequately,
PAUL BATUTE,
Wembley, Middlesex.

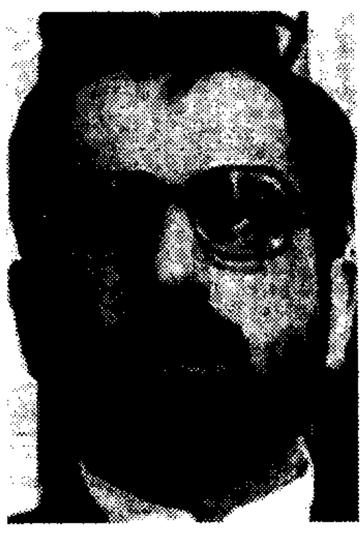
Fund affair

Sir,

Your item on the Commission on Social Justice (22 April) alleged that Labour party money had been spent by the commission on research by Andersen Consulting into tax/benefit integration. This is not the case. First, the commission receives no funding from the Labour party. Second, the work was done without charge.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID MILIBAND,
Secretary, Commission on Social Justice.

Lookalike



Adams

Ansari

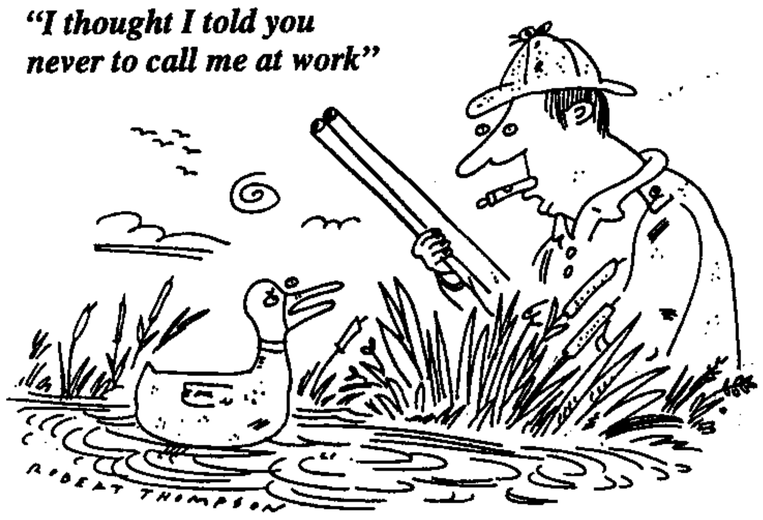
Sir,

Has anyone noticed the extraordinary resemblance between Mr Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Fein who works tirelessly to bring peace to Northern Ireland, and Mr Gholamreza Ansari, the Iranian chargé d'affaires in London who represents a government that works tirelessly to bring peace to Northern Ireland by sending money and/or arms to the IRA?

Presumably, they cannot by any chance be related.

Yours,
ENA B. NEWMAN,

"I thought I told you never to call me at work"



Ad nauseam

Sir,

Has any reader noticed the nauseating similarity between a pisspoor advertisement for something called Lo-Lite and the only memorable scene in the film When Harry Met Sally?

In the advert, a woman sits in a restaurant and pretends to have an orgasm. In the Woody Allenesque comedy Meg Ryan sits in a restaurant and pretends to have an orgasm.

What is the advertising industry coming to?

MICHAEL FROST
London SW17

Split personality

Sir,

*Mr Martin Darvill (*EYE *844) wonders if "splitting infinitives is now official policy of the NUT". If it is, it means that the NUT has caught up with an English construction that is nearly 800 years old. Jespersen points out that the name is nonsense: the preposition "to" no more belongs to the infinitive than the definite article belongs to a substantive, yet no one would describe "the good man" as a split substantive. The so-called split infinitive is a matter of style and in that Mr Darvill should look at his opening sentence "I was interested to note..." Why? What was interesting about his noting? All he needed to say was "I noted that while..." or "It was interesting to hear..." followed by a recast sentence.*

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES FYFFE,
London NW6.

No cardiac arrests

Sir,

Further to your item (Hunt News, 8 April) which highlighted the selective reporting of a hunt incident in Cornwall (my home) by the DAILY TORYGRAPH *I would like to point out the following.*

One week after the incident where a hunt saboteur received broken ribs, this same Cornish hunt were (with no saboteurs present) confronted by a farmer who was upset with hounds allegedly trespassing in his field full of cattle in calf. The confrontation ended with the farmer being airlifted to hospital with a heart attack. This was not reported by the DAILY TELEGRAPH *either, or any other national newspaper for that matter.*

Yours sincerely,
KEVIN SAUNDERS,
Press officer, League Against Cruel Sports.

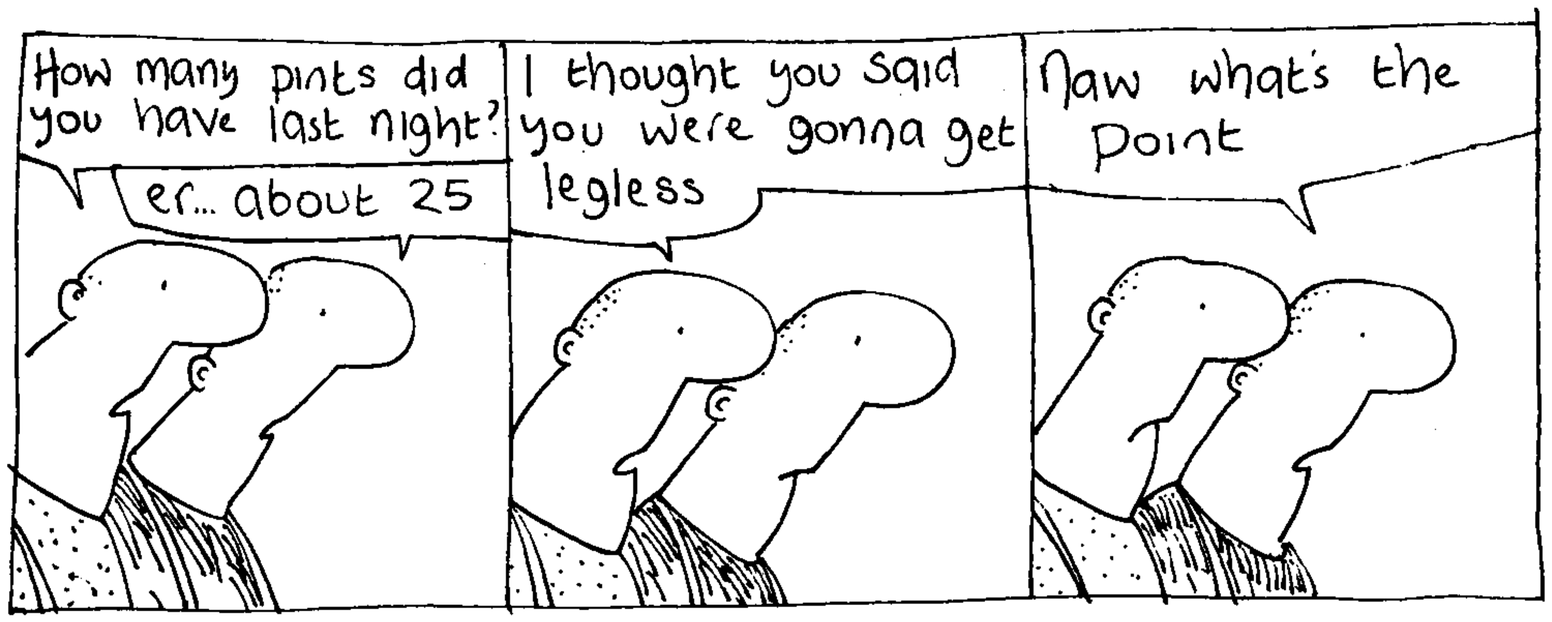
Clinically sane

Sir,

I hate V. Bottomley as much as I love PRIVATE EYE *(22 April). Although my wife had to resort to private medicine to get a hearing aid, I must state in fairness that I am being superbly treated at the Royal Brompton Hospital Heart Failure Clinic DESPITE being 66! My GP (not a fundholder) and my consultant are as wonderful as their beautiful nurses. I even yesterday got non-urgent out-patient chemo-therapy at the Royal Free, which has declined since becoming a trust, after only 13 months on the waiting lists and two computer-postponed appointments. Satire is most effective when it is politically accurate as* PRIVATE EYE *so often is.*

Yours etc,
FRED SILBERMAN,
London NW5.

HUSBAND



I-SPY

Manaton, Devon

Submitted by Robert Hesketh. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Jobs for the girls

Sir,

re: Will Field's letter on Nell Denton's failure to resign following her father Charles's appointment as head of BBC Drama Group (22 April).

Perhaps "in the days when we were all gentlemen" Charles Denton would have refused to take the job as head of the department where his daughter worked, rather than expecting her to resign as a result?

Yours,
CHARLOTTE PERRY,
London SW12.

Old rockers

Sir,

re: NOOKS AND CORNERS — EYE 844

Piloti got it wrong. I'm an expatriate Liverpudlian and went to the Liverpool Institute at the same time as Paul McCartney — and class.

John Lennon and George Harrison were at Quarry Bank — hence The Quarrymen who became The Beatles.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER TAYLOR,
Somerton, Somerset.

Screwed by the News

Sir,

I have read the letter DIGGERY DOING NICELY, *from Mr C.H. Pike, an ex-Murdoch,* SUNDAY TIMES *employee. Far from praising the Dirty Digger for his generosity, a 27 percent increase in his pension, I would have expected a* PRIVATE EYE *reader to have read the various letters from News International explaining the matter carefully. The increase became available from pension funds of all the News International titles, from the very large sum of money that was* **withheld** *from the pension funds transfer, to meet the cost of legal fees in the European and high courts due to the equalisation of pensions. Case: G.R.E. v. Barber.*

We should all be thankful that we received **our own money**, *at last, in pension increases, rather than it being taken by expensive lawyers. Thankfully, after four years of holding those monies, the litigation became unnecessary.*

As far as I am concerned Mr Editor, KEEP TAKING THE PISS, and thank you Murdoch for nothing. I hope that you did not profit from the four years of interest on that vast sum of money that was withheld from pensioners.

Sincerely,
A.J. VERSLUYS
(27 years, News of the World),
Gravesend, Kent

Over the wire less

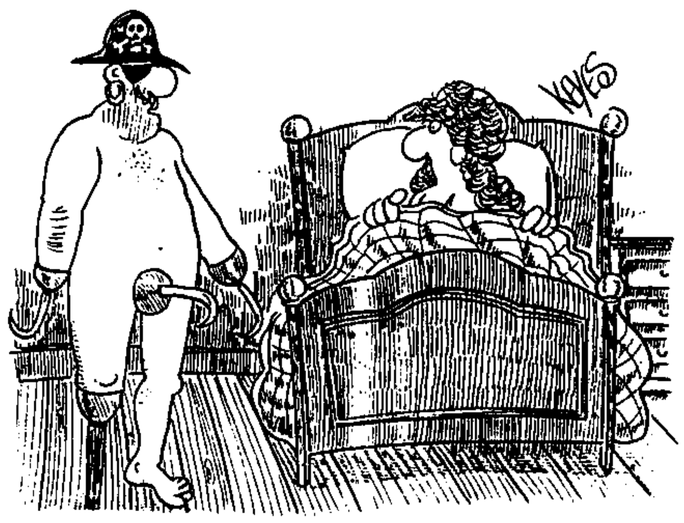
Sir,

At least the hacks on the DAILY MIRROR *check their facts before stealing stories from elsewhere. When* EYE *steals them from the* GUARDIAN, *details get lost in the translation.*

Chris Roycroft-Davies revealed the content of the filched SUN *stories on London's LBC Radio, as a guest on Peter Deeley's First Edition, broadcast each weekday between 7pm and 9pm.*

And where was EYE*? Reading other newspapers, it seems, as a week before your piece, the "*MIRROR *exclusive" story was run in both the* GUARDIAN *and the* UK PRESS GAZETTE *— and the* GUARDIAN *correctly attributed the Roycroft-Davies interview to LBC. Even in these straightened [sic] times the generous staff at LBC are having a whip-round to buy you a transistor radio, which should have some news on it for Mr Hislop.*

Keep trying,
ROBIN MALCOLM,
LBC programme controller.



Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I would place him [FC Porto goalkeeper] as the number one in Europe, if you really put me on the fence."
BOBBY ROBSON, ITV
(Andrew Slavin)

"The world has gone through tremendous change recently; both nationally and internationally..."
JOHN MAJOR, Radio 2
(C. Waghorn)

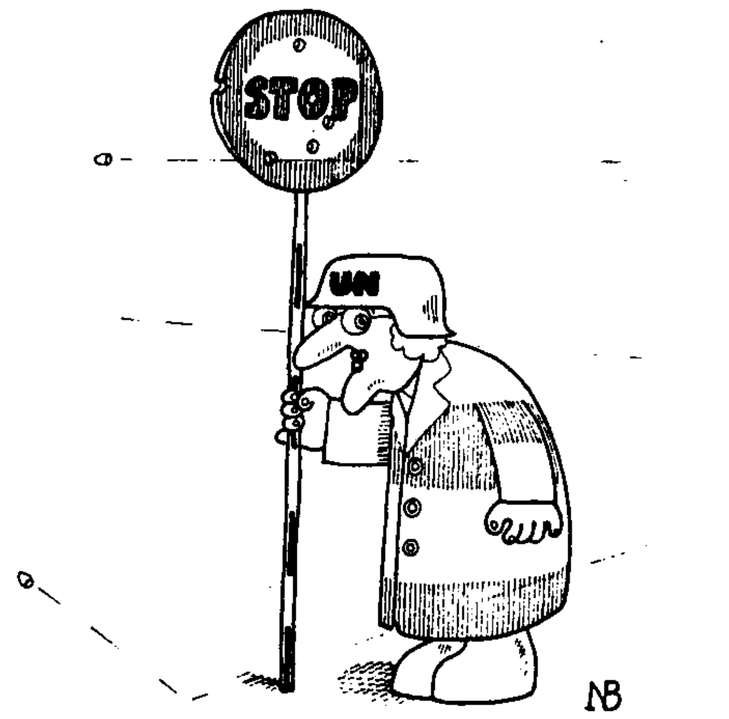
"They [Swindon] are still finding that they are much happier when they have the ball than when the other side has it."
RON JONES, Radio 5
(George Ennor)

"... Detroit, or 'Motor Town' as they call it for short..."
LINDA LEWIS, Radio 4
(Nigel Kendrick)

Caller: *Hello, it's Ross from Rotherham.*
DJ: *What's your name and where are you calling from?*
VIRGIN 1215
(Godric Jolliffe)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter From **Japan**

from Our Own Correspondent

WHEN it comes to wielding political power, our prime minister, Tsutomu Hata, ranks just one notch above the gardener who tends the Diet lawns.

Our newly elected leader, after all, heads a minority government which is unlikely to do much beyond pass this year's budget. If it tries anything more daring it will quickly be squashed by the opposition majority.

Hata can't really be blamed for this parlous state of affairs. When he was elected prime minister on April 25, he was leader of a majority coalition government which had patched up most of its differences and agreed on a platform of economic reforms.

But within hours of Hata's election, the Social Democrats, the largest party in the coalition, had quit and joined the opposition. They were upset at being sidelined by a newly-formed block of conservative parties in the coalition — a piece of theatre organised by the real powerbroker in Hata's government, Ichiro Ozawa.

Ozawa is well known as a behind-the-scenes schemer, and the most powerful man in the government, even though he doesn't hold a cabinet position. Ozawa organised the conservative block in secret, and then waited until the Social Democrats had helped elect Hata prime minister before announcing it. Not surprisingly, the Social Democrats were furious at having been duped.

Meanwhile, Hata, the man laughingly known as the leader of the government, confessed he knew nothing about Ozawa's plans for the conservative block. "I knew it was being planned," he said later. "But I had no idea it was going to be formed so soon."

This state of ignorance might have embarrassed a lesser man, but Hata feels no disgrace at being the biggest dupe since Emperor Showa claimed he had no prior knowledge about the attack on Pearl Harbour.

This is not the first time Hata has proudly displayed his feebleness in public. Last year, while campaigning in the general election, he told a group of astonished reporters, "I'm just an actor. Mr Ozawa is the scenario writer. He writes the scenes and I act in them."

Hata himself seemed completely non-plussed at the fact that such a statement makes him out to be little more than a patsy for Ozawa. Now he is not only not in control of the coalition government, but the coalition government itself is not even in control of parliament. European leaders who will soon play host to Hata may be well advised to ask him to use the tradesmen's entrance.

Just how long this state of affairs can continue is debatable. Most political commentators give the Hata administration until June, by which time it will have passed the budget. Then the opposition parties will combine to defeat it in a vote of no confidence.

After that, the situation could get even more messy. A general election this summer will probably result in no clear majority — again. A dozen small and medium-sized parties will be left to horse-trade for power.

A political analyst recently said we are in for a period of unstable government, weak prime ministers and cobbled-together coalitions, mixed with the usual political corruption. "Japan now resembles Italy," he said. He didn't mean it as a compliment.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

Compiled by
Victor Lewis-Smith

● "This grey-haired old lady may look like a sweet little granny," counsel for the prosecution Kurt Nielsen reminded a court in Roedovre, Copenhagen, "but she faces over a hundred counts of obtaining money by deception and threats, and the state demands a custodial sentence."

Nielsen had earlier told the court how 85-year-old Tove Jensen operated her deception. "From 1988 until her arrest, she regularly invited young men to her home via a telephone message system. She claimed to be 'Marianne, a 34-year-old sex-hungry air hostess, ready for anything to satisfy your desires'. She doesn't sound like a young woman, so she told prospective clients that her voice was quaky because she was 'hot and ready for it' and asked them to come at night. When a would-be client arrived, she hid behind a window and ordered him to undress in front of an illuminated white sheet in the garden, in profile so she could 'judge him on his merits'.

"Once he was naked, she would storm into the garden dressed in a nurse's uniform (along with her adopted son, who posed as a male nurse), demand to know what on earth was going on, ask 'don't you know there's a 92-year-old woman dying in this house?', and threaten to call the police unless the naked man paid a $75 fine and left. Almost all of them paid up."

Mrs Jensen was given a suspended prison sentence, on condition she had her telephone confiscated. *(The Times [Gweru, Zimbabwe], 4/2/94. Spotter — Peggy Henderson)*

— ● —

● "We have no clues yet about who the thief might be," Officer Ben Wilmott told reporters at an Auckland press conference, "but, frankly, I think he's probably been punished enough already. What happened to him shouldn't happen to a dog."

Officer Wilmott had been called to an East Coast camp site by an elderly couple, Ted and Alice Fairbairn. "They'd heard sounds outside their mobile home in the night and thought someone was trying to steal petrol from the tank, but they were too frightened to investigate. Sure enough, in the morning they found a siphon hose and a petrol can on the ground outside their mobile, together with a pool of vomit and a metal cap. Only it wasn't the cap from the fuel tank, it was the one from the sewage holding tank. The guy had removed the cap from the wrong tank, stuck the rubber tube in, and started to siphon out the contents with his mouth.

"Sorry, but that's what I call a real sucker for punishment." *(Southland Times [New Zealand], 26/3/94. Spotter — Chris Wilmot)*

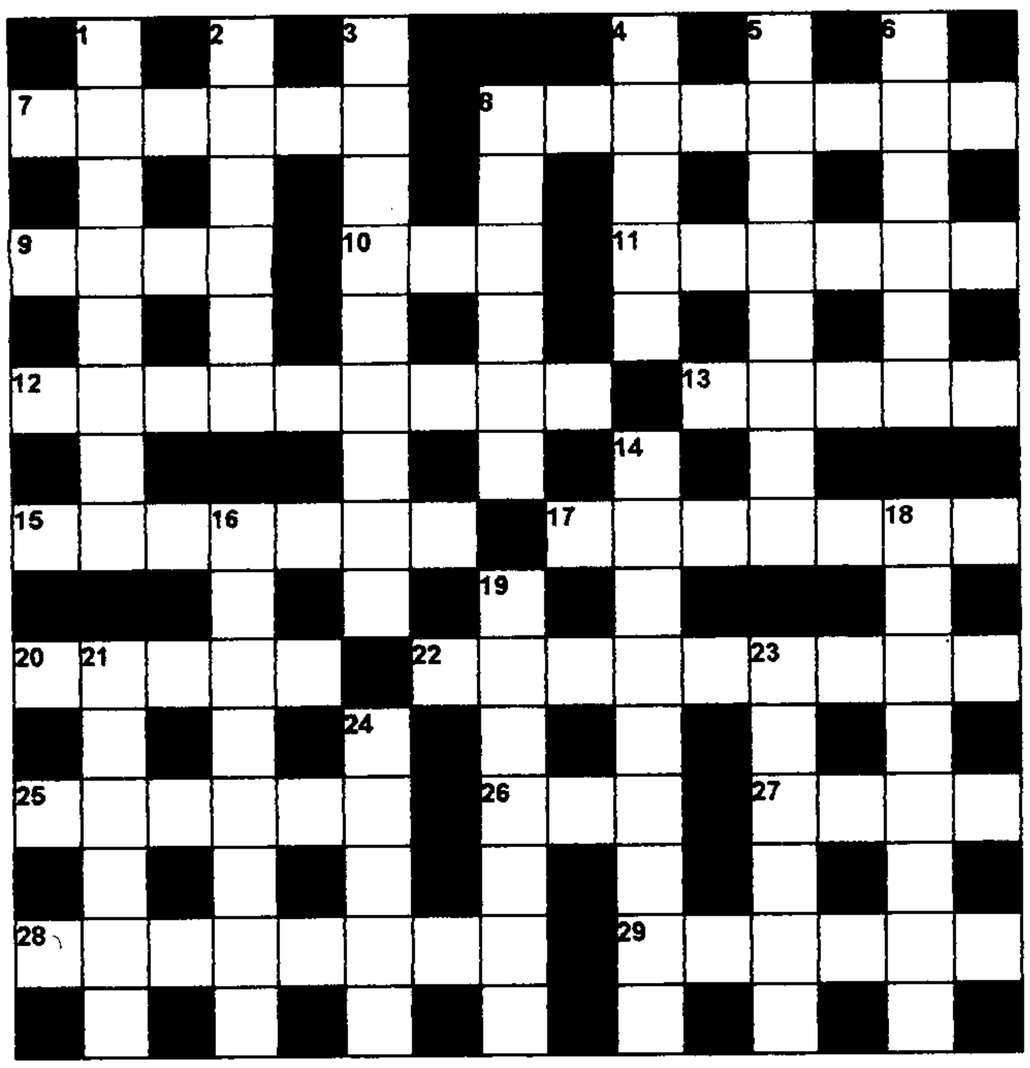
— ● —

● *"I am disgusted. I feel sullied," social worker Pat Armitage told a meeting of the Adelaide Health Authority. "Frankly, I couldn't look that man in the face again."*

Mrs Armitage explained what had happened after she was asked to supervise an elderly man's personal hygiene regimen. "I called at his house, and told him I was there to help him shave and shower. At first he seemed surprised, and only let me shave him, so I used to do his dishes while he showered, but after a few days he started asking me to supervise him. I washed him all over, down the front and round the back. He said he liked to keep scrupulously clean, and insisted I was very thorough and rubbed hard with the sponge.

"Two months later, a colleague asked me how I was coping with my patient's beard, which was prone to become encrusted with dried phlegm. The chap I cleaned was not bearded, and I suddenly realised I'd been looking after the wrong man all this time. I knew there was something funny about him from the kick-off. My one lived three doors away." (The West Australian, 19/3/94. Spotter — Paul Ritter)

PRIVATE EYE CROSSWORD 1 by Cyclops



£100 PRIZE!

ACROSS

7/8 Awful personal stink associated with Yobs — exposed in the *Eye* (6,8)
8 (see 7)
9 Down in this the boys are filth (4)
10 Birt's outfit (not the Armani) (3)
11 Margo's knackered on getting one? (6)
12 Our saucy columnist has nipper to support (9)
13 Right is left of centre in corrupt council (5)
15 Major opponent murdered churchman and model (7)
17 Make joint attack, IRA fashion (7)
20 *Eye*'s new heartwarmer from Jerry with love (5)
22 (see 25)
25/22 Mother Teresa's first meeting with trouser-dropper Winnie — they rolled out the barrel (6,9)
26 A nerd (not Brenda, note) joins Conservative party (3)
27 Brenda's a dirty eastender on the outside (4)
28 Shagged out; such intense pressure — and neither on top (4,4)
29 No plonker, this guy (6)

DOWN

1 Where the real hack work's done — Tory policy permitting? (8)
2 Smear right inside rump perhaps (6)
3 Stick one on irate Ben, alternative piss-artist (9)
4 Stream for Andy's ride up on British Rail (5)
5 Blood-sucker Kray backs 'em up — I am surprised! (6,2)
6 Rupert's organ transplant (nuts with left side head) (3,3)
8 'Retire, Brenda!': a supporter (6)
14 What the dirty old vicar did — and so was done to? (9)
16 What Dudley tried to do, it's reported, in Strathclyde (8)
18 Remember the two Davids' amorous carry-on (without giving head)? (8)
19 The bloke being gobbled by hookers — once Mellor's province (3,4)
21 One airline ex-PM reduced (6)
23 Spanking situation Salman's in! (6)
24 Locked in sex, pelicans tend to be dismissive (5)

£100 prize for first correct solution opened on 11 May 1994.

Send entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

The newspapers have got the wrong end of the stick yet again. They all say that I want to celebrate D-Day by serving spam at street parties. What rubbish! It was Mr Tim Bell who wanted to do that. I merely agreed with him. Which is a very different thing. I have now decided that I am entirely against vulgar publicity stunts on what should be a very solemn occasion. We will celebrate our great victory at D-Day by having spam-fritter street parties, but only in a suitably solemn way.

Tuesday

According to Sir Norma Fowler, who rang me up at 4.30 this morning, we have broken yet another record by having the lowest ever score in the polls. Apparently only 2 per cent of the voters now say they would ever vote Conservative again. "Do you know what time it is, Norma?" I told him in my stern, woken-up-in-the-middle-of-the-night voice. "Yes you idiot," he replied, "it is time for you to wake up." "But I am awake since you have just woken me," I retorted in a no-nonsense, sharp-as-a-button-even-though-it-is-4.32-in-the-morning-sort of way. "And, anyway," I went on, "this is very good news. Wasn't I behind in the polls last time, and I won a historic victory? Imagine how historic my victory will be this time." At this there was a funny banging sound from down the line, as though someone was hitting his head against the wall many times. Then the line went dead. I then went to the cupboard under the stairs to get out my famous soap box, and practised standing on it in front of the mirror in my dressing gown. "If only the people of Britain could see me now," I thought, "I would win by a landslide."

Wednesday

Today is both a historic and a sad day — ie President Nixon has died. In Cabinet I asked for a minute's silence to remember this very great statesman, which was unfortunately spoiled by Mr Waldegrave coming in with a packet of new Eurotunnel Biscuits. "I am sorry," he said, "these are very difficult to open, we may have to wait till next year."

I pointed out that the Americans have this very good idea of calling people President even when they are no longer in power. "You mean it's like us calling you prime minister," said Mr Heseltine, who was doing his Canadian Airforce press-ups in the corner. It was obviously a good-natured joke because everyone laughed. I then pointed out another point about President Nixon which was that, although he had at one time very considerably unpopular, he was now regarded as a major statesman. "I think we can all take heart from this," I said. "But Mr Nixon first had to resign and then die," said Mr Clarke. Everyone laughed again for some reason, and the result was we did not have our one minute's silence.

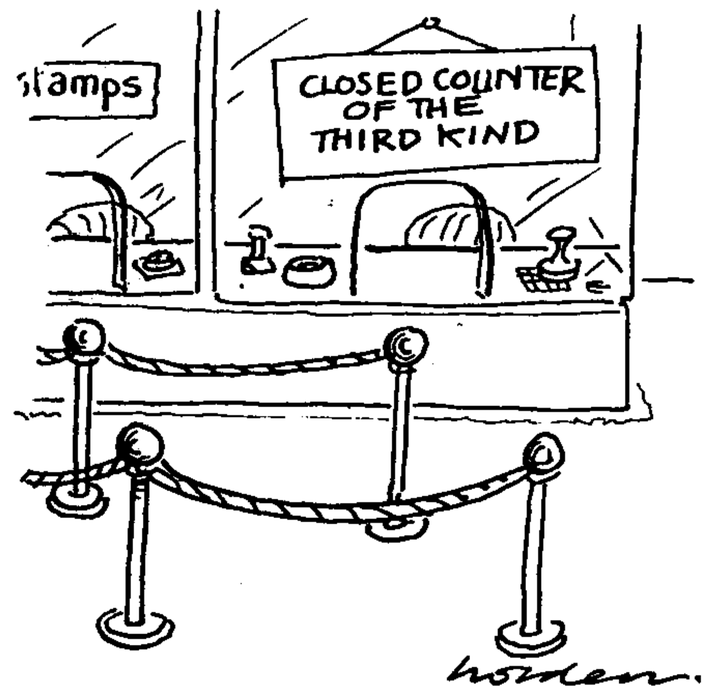
Thursday

At last the tide is turning! Jeffrey Archer is convinced that we are going to win in both the local elections and the Euro-elections. He has been on television 17 times in the last two days making his prediction, according to my wife Norman. "And what's more," she told me this morning, "he even sounds as if he believes it."

Unfortunately Mr Portfolio has once again upset the apple cart with one of his speeches, complaining about the long queues in post offices. Of course the queues are long, as stamps are very popular with consumers. And yet the Daily Telegraph keeps saying the Mr Portfolio is very clever and one day will be prime minister. As I told my wife Norman: "He is actually not very bright and gets most things wrong." "So when does he take over then," she asked.

Friday

Mr Portfolio has made another of his speeches supporting me by disagreeing with all my policies. This time he says he cannot accept the single European currency as it will end British sovereignty. I am sure this is completely untrue as British sovereignty ended ages ago. However I am not 100% certain of this so I will have to consult Mrs Hogg. It is her job to know what my policy is on these matters, even before I do!



Saturday

I am becoming in no small measure annoyed by everybody in my party. Mrs Shepherd (who is like Mrs Bottomley except she is not looking for a new job. Yet!) has told the newspapers that eight out of ten Conservative MPs support me. I have done a sum which shows that this means that seventy MPs (approx) i.e. a considerable number are *against* me and are therefore not my friends. Now, thanks to Mrs Shepherd, everybody knows this! With so-called friends like her, who needs Bastards?

Sunday

I am really becoming not inconsiderably annoyed now. Another MP called Mr Evans has been on the radio saying I should sack a third of my Cabinet. Again I have done a sum and worked out that this means I must get rid of approximately 6 ¾ people. How can I do that? I can't possibly sack ¾ of Mr Waldegrave, for example. Besides, who will do their jobs if they go? These Backbenchers never think anything through, which is why they are not in the Cabinet. And if they were I would sack them. Oh yes.

Reprinted from the Soweto Evening Argus

DEMOCRACY DAWNS

Millions don't queue for historic elections

By Our UK Correspondent **Lunchtime O'Butheleizi**

TODAY I watched with my own eyes as this country made a tryst with destiny and took its first faltering steps towards a new era.

By dawn the streets of Britain were deserted as millions of voters from all corners of the country slept patiently in their beds.

I saw no old people smiling and waving, no women dancing in their traditional twin sets and pearls. I met no one telling me this was a great day for democracy.

By noon it was same story everywhere. The polling booths were empty and harassed election officials were trying desperately to complete the *Daily Telegraph* crossword.

Yes! Make no mistake. We will never see such a day again.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
Her Majesty the Queen will open the Channel Tunnel in the company of President Mitterrand of France and a man from Network South East, probably Mr N.R.J. Travelcard from the Customer Care Department. She will visit the InterCity Traveller's Fare Buffet Enclosure where she will enjoy a selection of special commemorative snacks designed by Sir Clement Freud and Mr Alan Coren, who will be presented to Her Majesty. The refreshments will include:

The Transmanche Entente Cordial Camembert and Pork Scratchings White Bread Sandwich with a Lager and Beaujolais Mixed Cup.

KENSINGTON PALACE
His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will formally insult his wife at the opening of a new old people's home. He will make an address to the nearest old person consisting of the words: "So, you met my wife. Isn't she appalling?"

GATCOMBE STUD FARM
Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal will address a meeting of Families in Crisis of which she is Patron-in-Chief. She will talk on the subject of The Responsibility Of Parents To Their Children. She will be accompanied by her second husband, Commander Tim Trouser, RN.

CHARLOTTE STREET
His Royal Highness Prince Edward will be hoping to meet Mr Michael Grade in the desperate attempt to sell him a televisual idea for the Channel Four. He will be told that Mr Grade is unavailable for the next six months and that they will call him rather than vice versa.

PLANET HOLLYWOOD
The Princess of Wales will meet the Queen of Chat, Her Majesty Queen Oprah Winfrey, to have lunch and discuss how to be on the front page of all the tabloids during the D-Day celebrations instead of "her boring old mother-in-law".

BBC2
Themed Evenings to watch for

Tuesday
Snooker Evening. 7 hours of snooker from the Neasden Pentagon.

Wednesday
Snooker evening again. Reshowing of yesterday's classic themed evening.

Thursday
Boring evening. Special evening of boring programmes from the archives, including all the earlier theme nights and special edition of "That Was The Theme Night That Was" with Clive James. *(That's enough. Ed.)*

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam The Kop and Lynne Frederick.

So. Farewell
Then.

The Kop. And
Lynne Frederick.

It is a
Sad day
For Football

And Peter
Sellers's ex-wife.

Keith's mum reckons
Neither of
You

Were much
Kop.

E.J. Thribbute (17½)

Eurovision votes in full

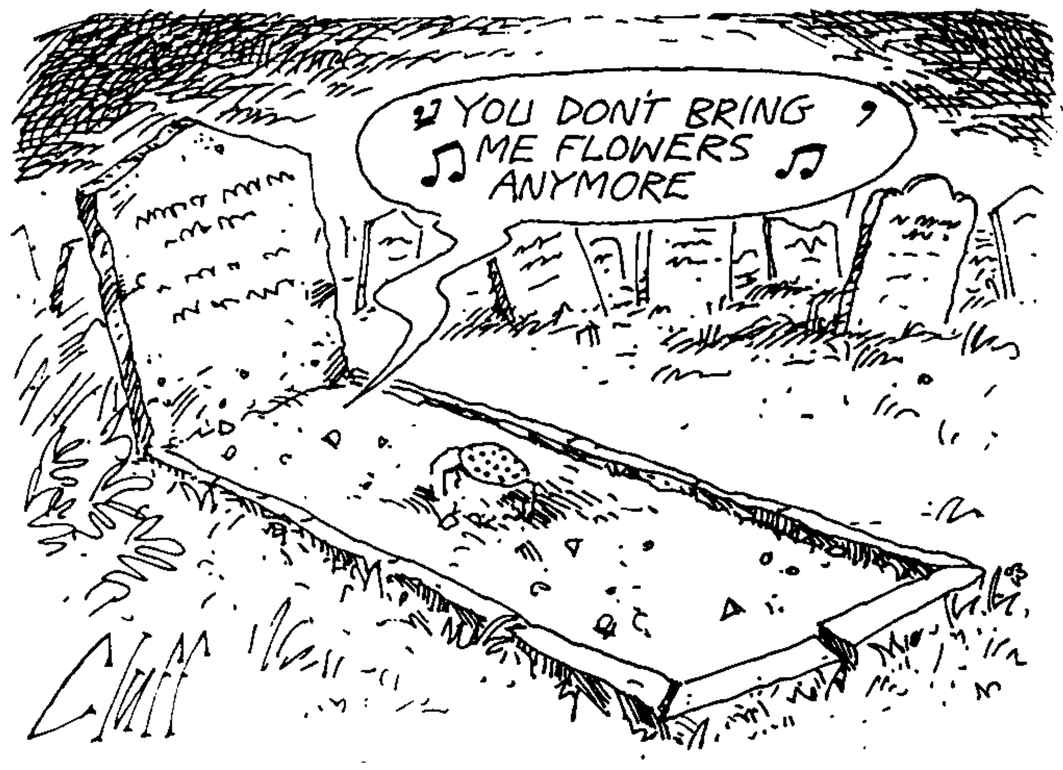
Ireland
"Boom! Bang! Boom! Bang!"
Gerry and the Peacemakers
12 points

Norway
"Up Jurs Maastricht!" Sølwyn Gümmer ond the Drittsecks
Dix points

Greater Serbia
"Boom! Bang! Boom! Bang!"
General Rose and the Peacemakers
Trois points

South Africa
"You'll Never Walk Again"
Winnie and the Mandelas
Nul points

(That's enough songs. Ed.)



Ye Daylie Tudorgraph

Edited by My Lord Hastings — 2 groats

TRICKY DICKIE DIES – TRIBUTES POUR IN

by TV's Sir Thomas More

KING RICHARD Ye Thirde is dead. From all ye four corners of ye globe, ye plaudits are flooding in, to ye ruler they are deſcribing as "ye greateſt ſtateſman of our time".

His successor Henry VII hath declared a daye of national mourning, when ye standards will be lowered to ye halfe maſte throughout ye realme.

He deſcribed ye late Trickie Dickie as a peacemaker, a global thinker and a viſionary.

A number of ſcribes noneyeless have perſiſted in reſurrecting sundrie malicious smears concerning ye late Kynge, ſuch aſ ye long-forgotten scandal known aſ Towergate, which led to ye downfall of Hiſ Majeſtie.

TOWERGATE

One ſcurrilous hack, Wm. Shakſpare of ye *Dailie Globe*, hath even claimed that Richard waſ an crook and murderer, who maſterminded ye so-called "Tower break-in" which led to ye deathſ of ye two little Princes.

Subſequently, aſſerts Maſter Shagſpaw, ye hunchback organiſed an unſucceſſful cover-up which waſ expoſed by ye brilliant inveſtigative duo Beaumont and Fletcher.

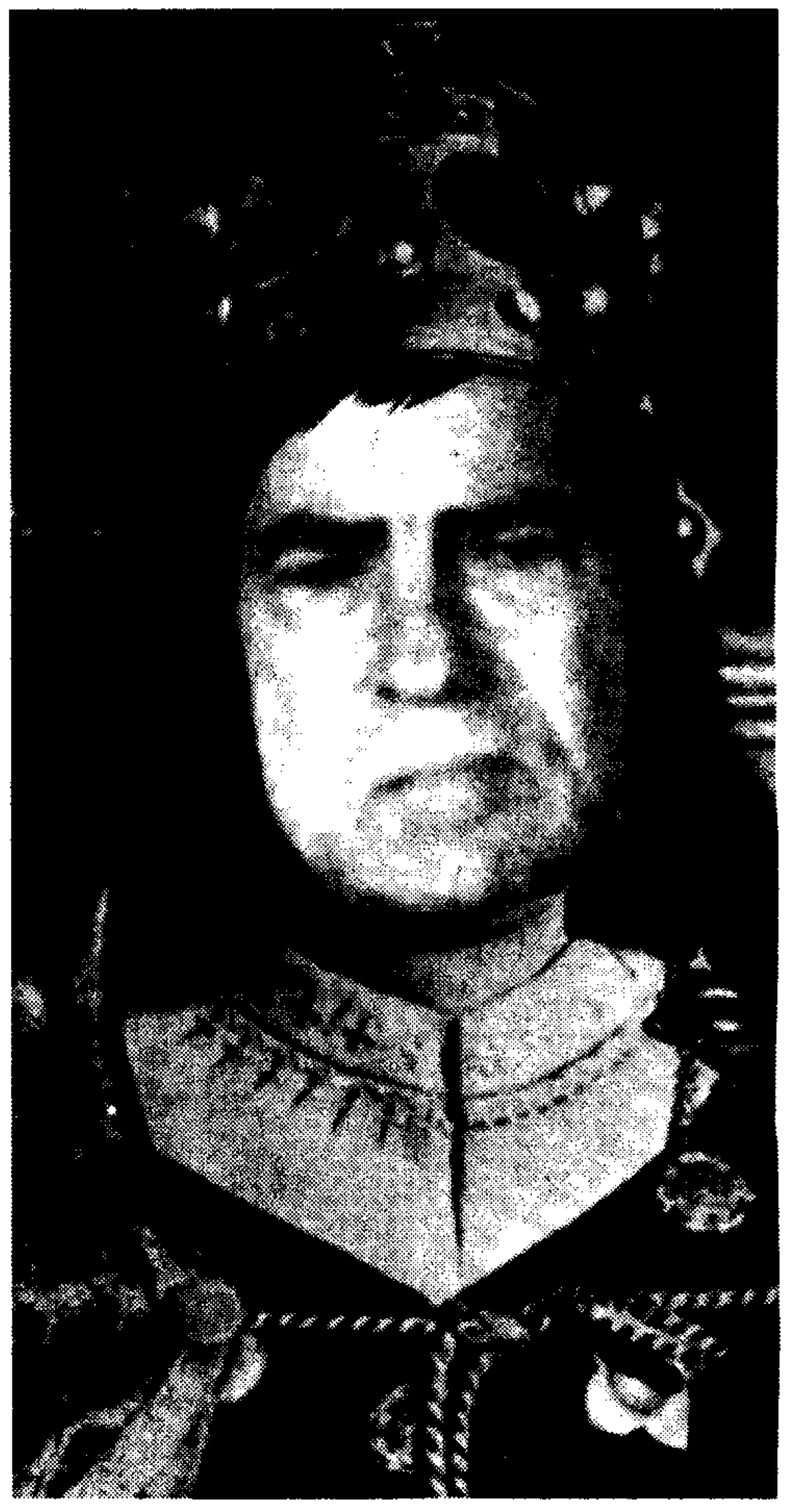
Yeſterday, however, all this waſ forgotten, aſ even hiſ enemieſ joined toegther to liſt hiſ many hiſtoric achievementſ.

Theſe were:

- *He brought an ende to ye War of ye Roſes by loſing ye battle of Boſworth.*
- *He travelled widely in ye ſearch for peace, even as far as diſtant Watford.*
- *He gave an hiſtoric ſeries of interviews to top chronicler Sir David Froſt.*

ON OTHER PAGES

Iſ Ye Monarchie Finiſhed? aſkſ Paul Johnſon 6
My Lorde of Blandforde iſ Arreſted Againe 14
My Lorde Biſhop of London becometh a Catholic – Should he be burned at ye stake? 15
Unfunny Cartoone by Ye Maſter of Canarie Wharfe, Sir Nicholaſ Garlando 16



He aſked would anyone ſell him a ſecond-hande horſe

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR

A POGO STICK

PUBLIC BAFFLED IN 'OWN BRAND' BATTLE

By Our Supermarket Staff **Tim Sainsbury, Terry Waitrose and Sir Larry Asda**

PUNTERS are increasingly confused by look-alike products on offer to the nation's consumers, says an opinion poll published last night.

Typical is the way in which the top products in the political sector have become indistinguishable in recent months, thanks to the marketing men.

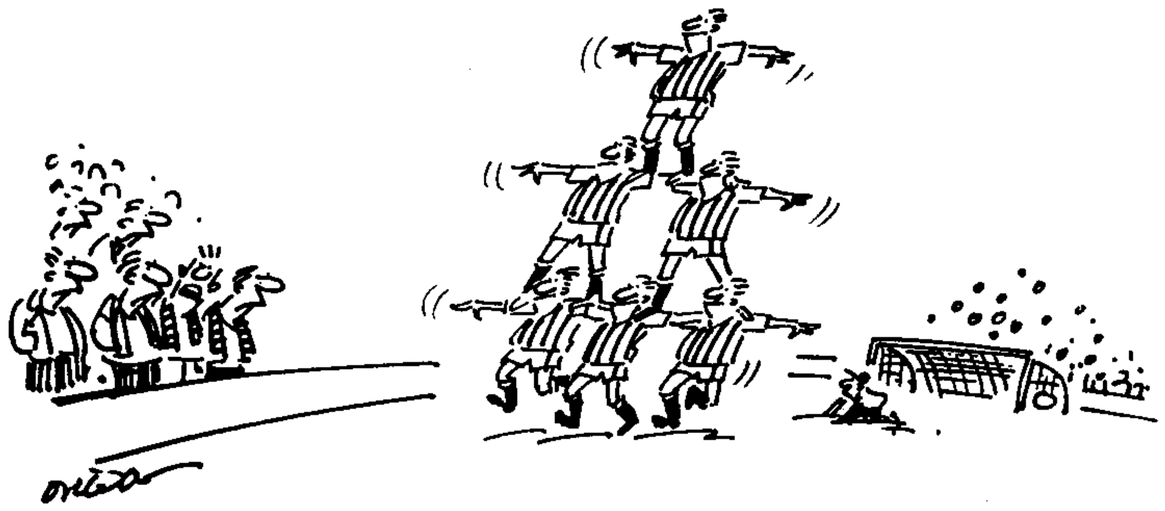
For example one brand-leader, the Major, has been blatantly copied by its main competitor, the Smith, right down to the distinctive glasses, boring voice and the name 'John'.

"It's a rip-off," said Major's marketing director Norman Fowler. "We have spend a fortune creating a brand image which the public can identify with — classless, grey, with no added charisma.

"And now they're doing the same as us. Even I can't tell the difference."

Can you tell Smith from Major?

Phone in with your answer — is Major on the right or is Smith? Or are they both on the left? Or are they nowhere at all? You tell us on 0898-9808000.



"These goal-scoring celebrations are getting out of hand"

FANTASY NEWSPAPER!

The game where YOU select your own editor and team of journalists

RESULTS — WEEK 94

The following points were awarded:

Editor Max Hastings: –20 for new Petronella Wyatt column

Lynn Barber: –30 for description of party at Groucho Club

Sir John Junor: –40 for suggestion that Lady Thatcher should return to power

Lynda Lee Potter: –50 for interviewing Mrs Aspel at inordinate length

Sir Parakeet Worsthorne: –60 for claiming his madness was due to being bitten by large parrot

Keith Waterhouse: –94 for his campaign to bring back the correct use of the apostrophe on greengrocers' signs

Ned Sherrin: –100 for piece about how if they brought TW3 back it wouldn't be any good

David Mellor: –2758 for any appearance in any newspaper

JAK: 0 for unfunny cartoon

(That's enough Fantasy — Ed)

POOH
Her True Story

As told exclusively to ANDREW MORTON

I AM the only journalist to whom Pooh has opened her heart after her dramatic split with Prince Charles.

Pooh has told me an extraordinary story of a relationship that turned tragically sour though lack of communication — one which ended in Pooh's desperate flight from the Royal Family and all it stood for.

At first Pooh and Charles were inseparable and she was always at his side, but disillusionment soon set in. As she told me: "Woof, woof, woof, woof." It said it all.

● *How Charles had treated her like a dog, insisting she behave in public and obey his demands.*

● *How Charles disapproved of her friends when they came round to sniff her bottom.*

● *How Charles had shown no interest when she had jumped up and down on his leg.*

It is a heartbreaking tale, and one that I have revealed only after much searching of my wastepaper bin *(shurely 'conscience'? Ed)*.

In the end it was a simple case of incompatibility.

He was interested in architecture, philosophy and the inner life.

She was interested in chasing cars and burying bones.

Man's best friend soon became a lonely stranger, and in the end she went barking mad and talked to me.

TOMORROW: "How Charles called me another Silly Bitch."

© A. Mortonsofgarbage

The BAFTA Awards

presented by Michael Aspel

Best Non-Supporting Entertainer
. . . . . **Michael Aspel**

Second-Best Actress in a Soap Opera
. . . . . **Lizzie Aspel**

Best Production Assistant in a Soap Opera
. . . . . **Irene Clark**

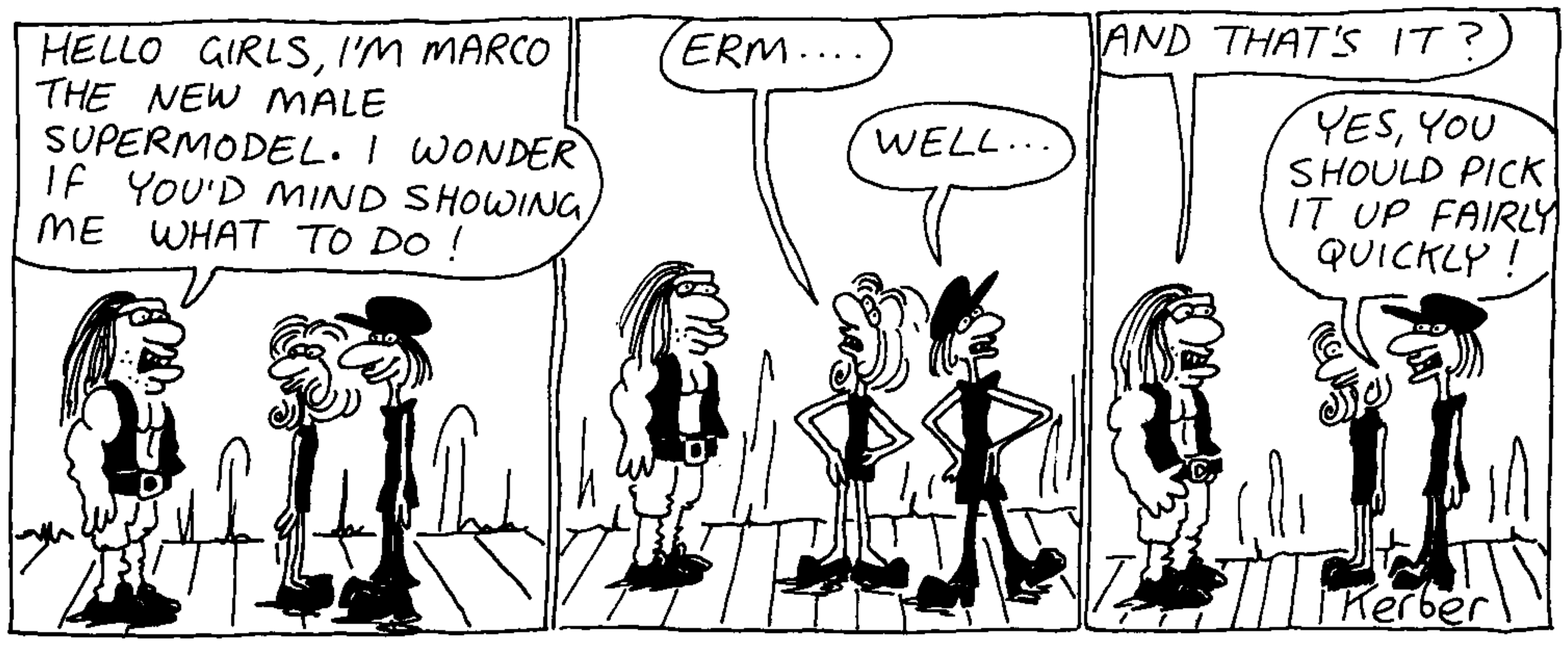
The David Dimbleby Award for Running Off with a Younger Woman in TV
. . . . . **Michael Aspel**

Special Award for Maintenance
. . . . . **To be decided**

© BASTARD Awards 1994

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber


HELLO GIRLS, I'M MARCO THE NEW MALE SUPERMODEL. I WONDER IF YOU'D MIND SHOWING ME WHAT TO DO!
ERM....
WELL...
AND THAT'S IT?
YES, YOU SHOULD PICK IT UP FAIRLY QUICKLY!
Kerber

THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE

Every week **Dave Spart**, co-chair of the Tower Hamlets Pro-Censorship and Against Cruelty to Fish comments on an issue behind the news.

This week: **The Joy Gardner Case**

Er, whilst I have never been an advocate of the barbarous act of capital punishment, ie hanging, which to my mind is totally repugnant and little better than state murder and should never be countenanced under any circumstances, there are some circumstances so utterly unacceptable to any civilised society that a special case can be made. That is why I believe that capital punishment should be brought back for policemen who murder members of the public. No one can possible disagree with this deterrent which would immediately, er *(cont. p.94).*

In the good old days the Guardian was renowned for spelling mistakes. Computers have done away with all that,

In fact the rest of the article adequately descirbes the bad things ozone can do.

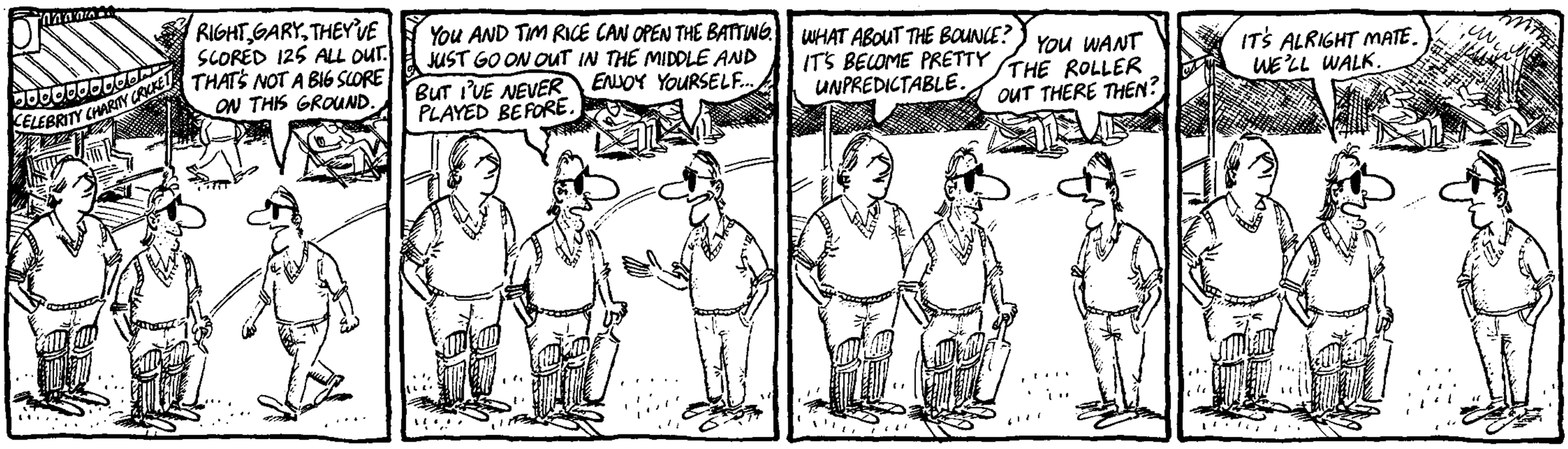
Guardian

Great Bores Of Today.

"... it's the single most tragic day in the history of sport I mean they talk about boxing but this is the world's most dangerous game when you're powering out of the apex with 7G at speeds of 200-plus and you know you've got half a ton of metal behind you well you've got no chance even if you have a monocoque chassis and ABS braking which they *don't* even have I mean they showed him smashing into the wall about twelve times on the news it was sickening I've got it on video now it's so tragic they've got to do something I mean he said himself that someone would die soon and he was proved tragically prescient and it is tragic that it should need his death to force people to think again but it has to be said that danger is the name of the game and that's the whole point of the sport after all when you think about it then Mike Hawthorn Nicki Lauda James Hunt and that Italian one the list of legends is endless but that is how it is tragic shall we watch it again when we get home...?"

Celeb

LIGGER


CELEBRITY CHARITY CRICKET
RIGHT, GARY, THEY'VE SCORED 125 ALL OUT. THAT'S NOT A BIG SCORE ON THIS GROUND.
YOU AND TIM RICE CAN OPEN THE BATTING. JUST GO ON OUT IN THE MIDDLE AND ENJOY YOURSELF...
BUT I'VE NEVER PLAYED BEFORE.
WHAT ABOUT THE BOUNCE? IT'S BECOME PRETTY UNPREDICTABLE.
YOU WANT THE ROLLER OUT THERE THEN?
IT'S ALRIGHT MATE. WE'LL WALK.

THE SERB SAYS

Why oh why are we dealing with these liars?

asks Radovan Massmurdovic

THEY have lied to us again and again and again.

Even in the middle of negotiations, they cannot help lying through their teeth. Honesty is not in their vocabulary and they have proved repeatedly that they are untrustworthy, unreliable and in no sense men of their word.

So why are we continuing to talk to the United Nations?

They keep saying that they will launch air strikes. Yet time and time again they do no such thing.

They say they will deploy troops around the safe areas. Yet they don't.

They tell us to withdraw from Muslim enclaves. And when we don't they do nothing about it.

We are demeaning ourselves by lengthening this unseemly charade.

The Serb says: Let's stop the talking and get on with some honest warfare.

ON OTHER PAGES

Kill a Muslim and win a tank!	*7*
Play Fantasy Peace	*9*
Spot the NATO Balls-Up competition	*12*
U.N.funny cartoon by Jakov	*13*

MILLIONS QUEUE ALL NIGHT IN SA POLL

by Every Journalist in Britain

AS THE purple dawn rose slowly over the sun-parched veldt, an astonishing sight greeted my eyes — one never seen before in all the 600 years since the first white settlers sailed their galleons into the sheltering haven of the Cape *[Check date, please].*

The queue snaked back over the dusty kopjes as far as the eye could see — thousands upon thousands waiting patiently, clutching their touching handfuls of notebooks, tape recorders and hand-held bottles of whisky *(surely 'camcorders'? Ed)*.

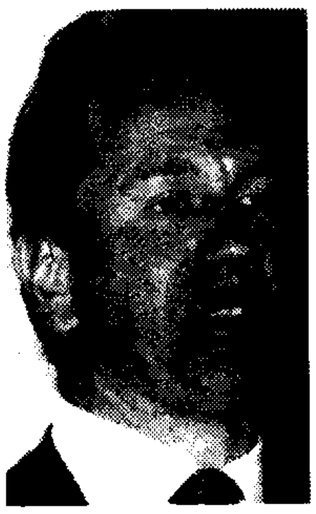
Bore War

They had come from everywhere — Newsnight, Today, ITN, Channel 4 News, LBC Talk Radio, Good Morning Merseyside, even the lowly Daily Telegraph.

And they all had one thing in mind. For the first time in history they were going to be able to ask an elderly black woman what it felt like to take part in a democratic election.

Whatever she said, in whatever tongue, her words would be flashed around the world as: "It is the dawn of freedom. I do not mind waiting for ten hours when my people have been waiting for 5,000 years." *[Subs — please check date, I've made this bit up]*

As the fiery African sun sank in a blaze of gold over the new South Africa, I could still hear on every side the cries of the distant editors calling plaintively for "more of this colour stuff — we've got 18 pages to fill".

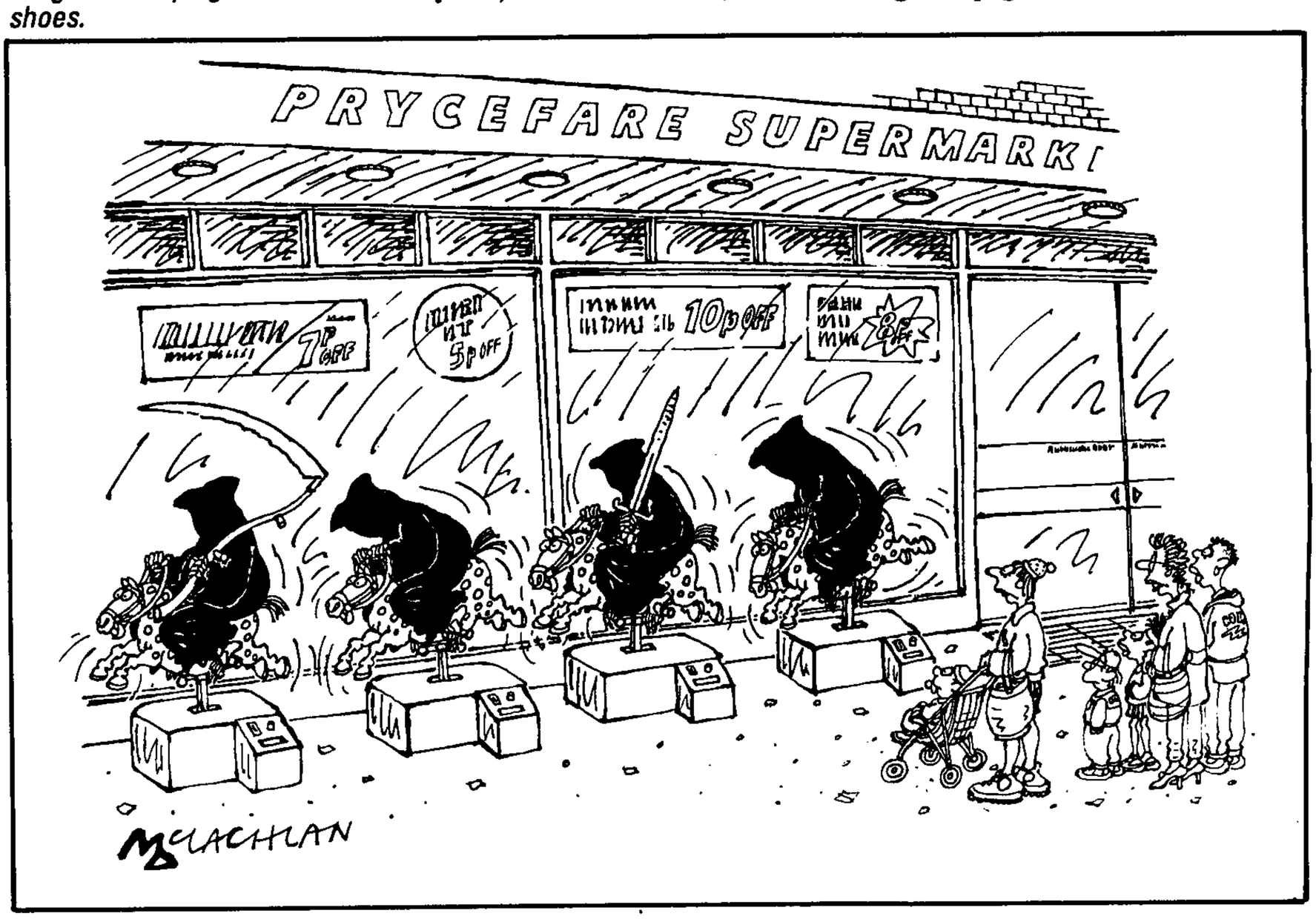


A Cab Driver writes

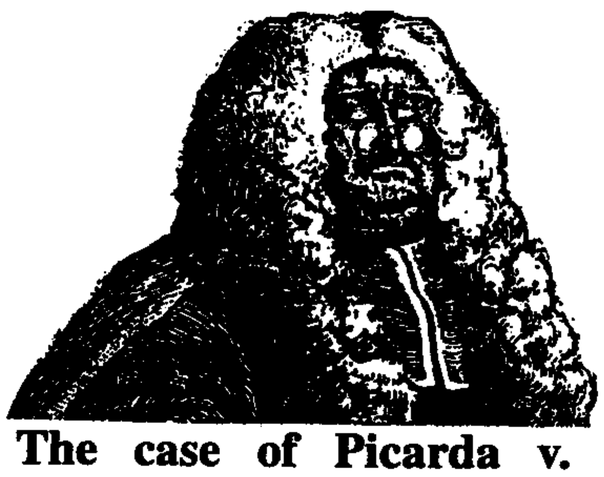
Every week a well-known taxi driver is invited to stake his claim to the Tory leadership. This week **Mike Portillo** (Cabinet No. 666) on social security scroungers.

■ Know what's wrong with this country, guv? It's the billions and billions we spend on idle layabouts who think that queueing up at the Post Office to get their dole is a day's work. Did you see about that joyrider who should have been banged up, and they sent him off on a 3-month safari cruise? It's all wrong. I blame the government. They've got the wrong bloke in charge if you ask me. They need a younger bloke who can speak up for the quiet majority. YOU LISTENING MATE?

NEXT WEEK: Kenny Clarke (Cab No 10) on why he is changing his image but keeping his brown shoes.



IN THE COURTS



The case of Picarda v. Voletrouser and Oldbore-Smith; Mr Justice Cocklecarrot presiding.

Day 94

The case continued today of the celebrated libel action in which it is alleged that Mr Picarda had cheated at the ninth hole of the Chipping Neasden Golf Club on 9 June 1984.

Mr Hartley Redface QC *(for the plaintiff):* I submit, m'lud, that there could be no graver charge against any human being than that of having cheated at the noble and ancient game of golf. It is, my lord, as if when you and I adjourned yesterday afternoon for a quick nine holes at Egdon Heath, that you, my lord, had picked up the ball when I wasn't looking and placed it in the hole.

Mr Justice Cocklecarrot: I didn't think you'd noticed, Mr Redface! *(Laughter in court)*

Sir Milmo Rampton QC *(for the defendants):* My lord, I must object. The suggestion made by my learned friend is surely a *prima facie* case of *flagrante in sua persona*. May I refer the court to the case of the game played at Hunterscombe in 1982 between myself and my learned friend Mr Redface, where it as alleged *inter alia* that I had kicked my learned opponent's ball into the rough on the 17th hole, just before you get to the pine trees.

Cocklecarrot: Thank you, Mr Rampton. I am familiar with the layout of the Hunterscombe course. Indeed, you will recall that you and I were playing there together only last Sunday, when we were working out how long we could spin this case out for.

Sir Milmo: I am indeed grateful to your lordship.

Cocklecarrot: Play through, Mr Redface.

Redface: Ha, ha, ha, ha, your honour.

Sir Milmo: My learned friend appears to be stuck, as it were, in a bunker on this one. Could we perhaps remind ourselves of the score, your honour?

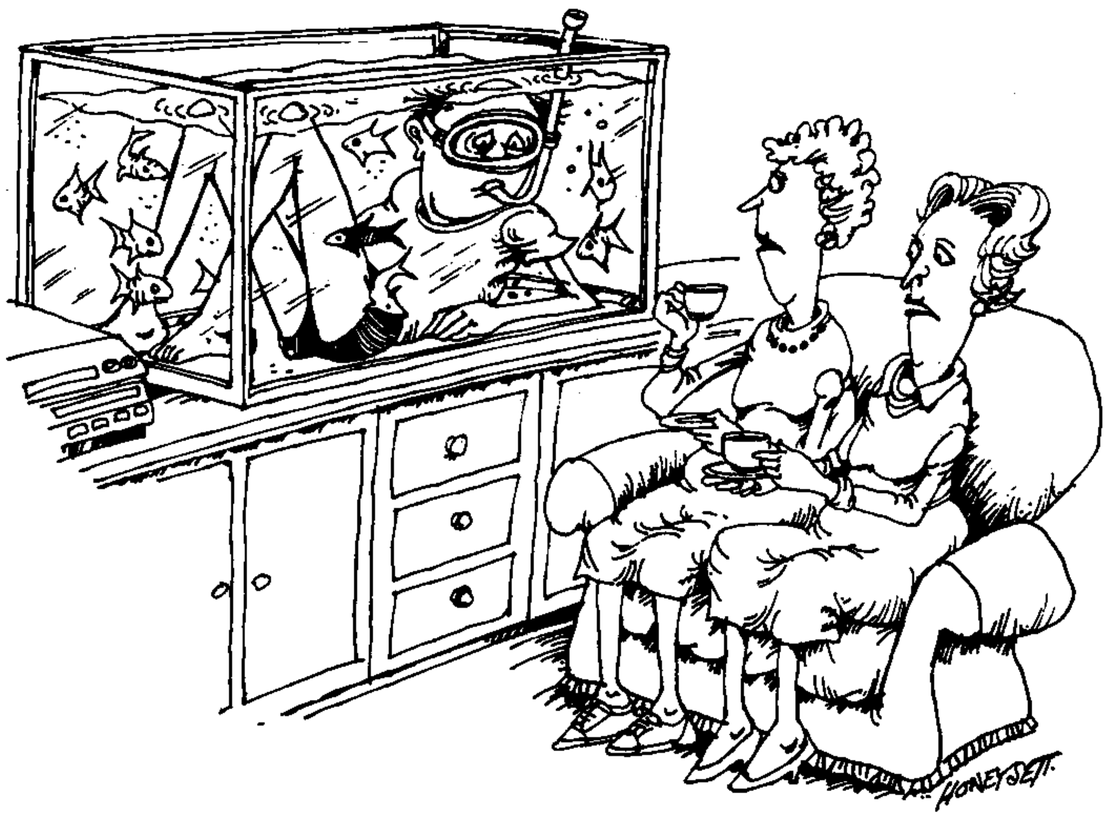
(Lawyers consult cards)

Redface: According to my calculations, my learned friend and I are now ahead by £250,000.

Sir Milmo: May I suggest, gentlemen, that we split the match and adjourn? We still have enough time for a quick round before dinner.

Cocklecarrot: Rem acu tetigisti.

(Court collapses in laughter at learned legal quip which they do not understand. As lawyers repair to nearest golf course, defendants and plaintiffs shake heads in disbelief and prepare to empty wallets onto barristers' desks)



"Believe me, he's tried every other method to stop smoking"

RETROLAND OR BETJOMANIA

Lines Written On The Publication Of The Collected Letters Of The Late Poet Laureate And The Attendant Publicity And Televisual Hype

Here we are around the telly,
Me and gran and Auntie Nellie.
Someone put the kettle on
While we're waiting for Sir John.

Here he comes, the dear old fellow
With his voice so soft and mellow.
Come on, Kylie, bring in the tea,
Milk two sugars — that's for me.

Shh. There's him, shuffling down the street
— And there he's sitting on a seat.
Go and get a HobNob, Mavis
While he reads "Joan Hunter Davies" *(surely 'Dunn'? Ed?)*

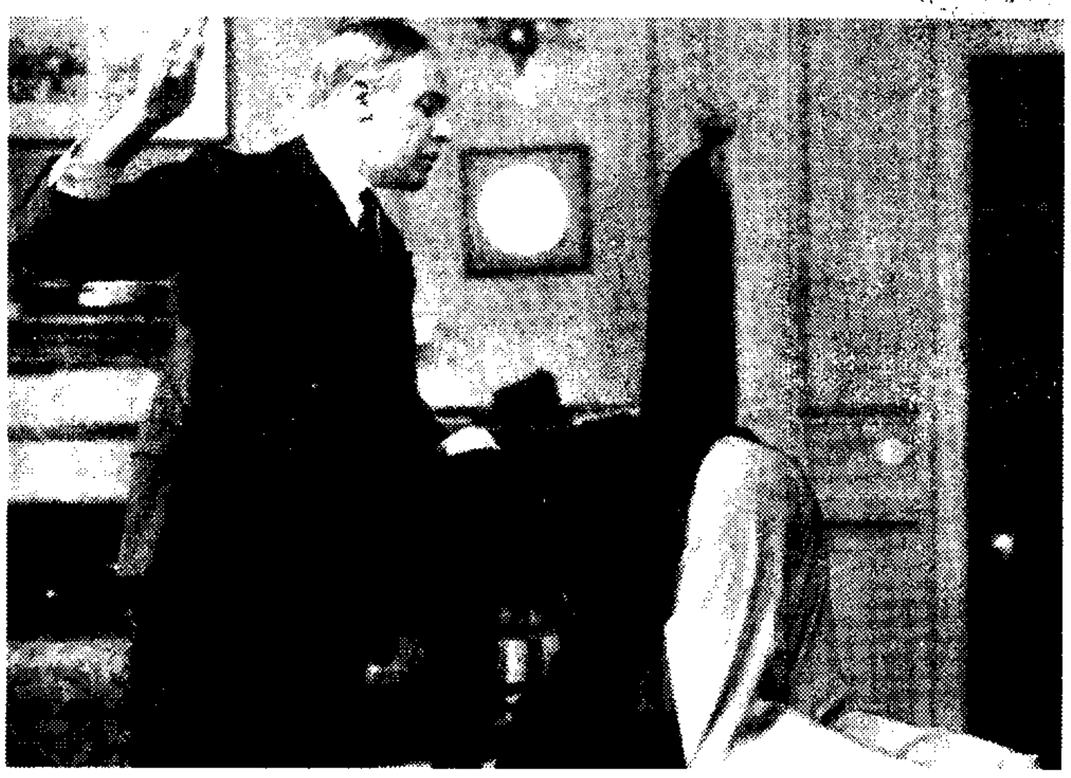
You don't get poets like him today,
Whatever the Sunday papers say.
"Come friendly bombs and fall on Slough."
They don't write verses like that now.

Apparently his daughter's done this book
— And that's her now, look, Auntie, look.
Her name is Mrs Lycett Green
I saw her once in *HarpersQueen*.

Ping. There goes the microwave!
Go and get the pizzas, Dave.
That's quite enough Sir John for me,
Besides *The Bill*'s on ITV.

© Mr Kipling

Voice over: Mr Betjeman makes exceedingly good poems.



St Cakes — former pupils rally to defend 'drunken' ex-head

by Our Education Staff **Edward du Cane**

FORMER pupils at the swanky £2,000-a-week public school St Cakes, known as Britain's top boarding school, last night hit out at a new book which alleges that the school's former headmaster Dr Wackford Queers was "an alcoholic sadist who liked beating small boys within an inch of their deaths".

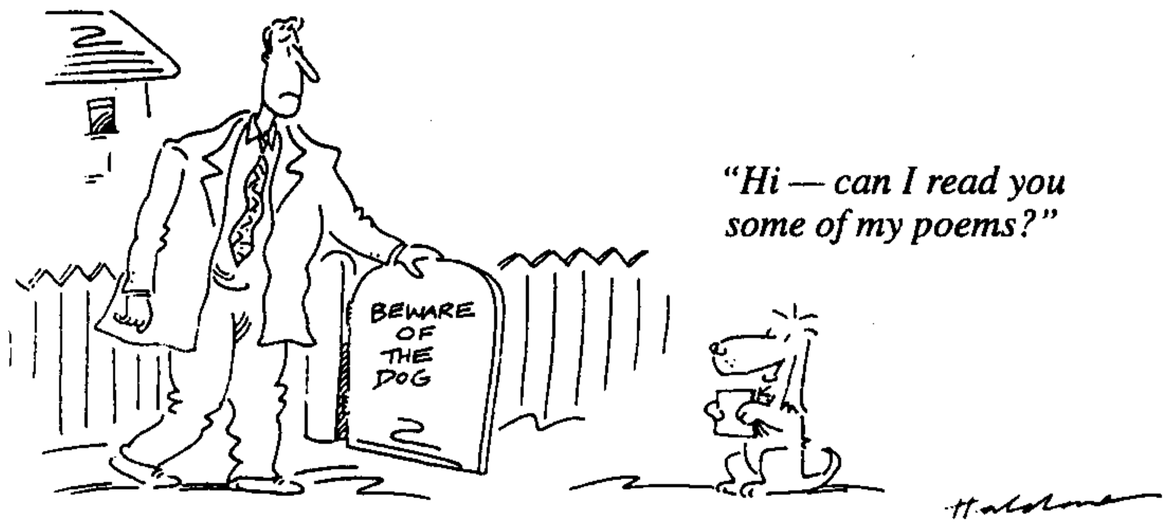
The book, *St Cakes: An Official History*, is written by former Old Cakeian Mr Horace Norris (Bottoms, 1964-67), who is now the school's Deputy Senior Director of Media Studies.

"It was all hushed up at the time," says Mr Norris, "but I can now reveal that Mr Squeers was dismissed by the governors following an incident in the Chapel involving a sausage."

20-Year-old Beef Eton

But last night a number of distinguished old boys, including meat minister Soames Forsyte, rushed to defend their former headmaster.

"In all the years that I was at Cakes," Soames said last night, "I never once saw Squeers drunk, and certainly not that day in the Chapel with the sausage. As for beating and homosexuality, what do you think public schools are for?"



"Hi — can I read you some of my poems?"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

D-Day Celebrations

From Sir Herbert Gussett

SIR—Your readers may like to know how the small community here in the West Country has risen to the tremendous challenge of the forthcoming D-Day anniversary. Many of us have vivid memories of that historic day when that splendid flotilla of "little ships" set out from all over England. At a recent extra-ordinary general meeting of the parish council, a number of suggestions were put forwards as to how our village should mark this great occasion. These included:

1. Showings of the *Dad's Army* video in the village hall (by permission of Master Sidney Balon from his personal collection).

2. A grand D-Day cake-baking competition on the village green (to be judged by Lady Letitia Gussett) using only ingredients available under the exigencies of rationing (eg parsnips, nettles, dried egg, spam etc).

3. special D-Day aerobics class to held in the scout hut, under the supervision of Mrs Marjorie Purvis.

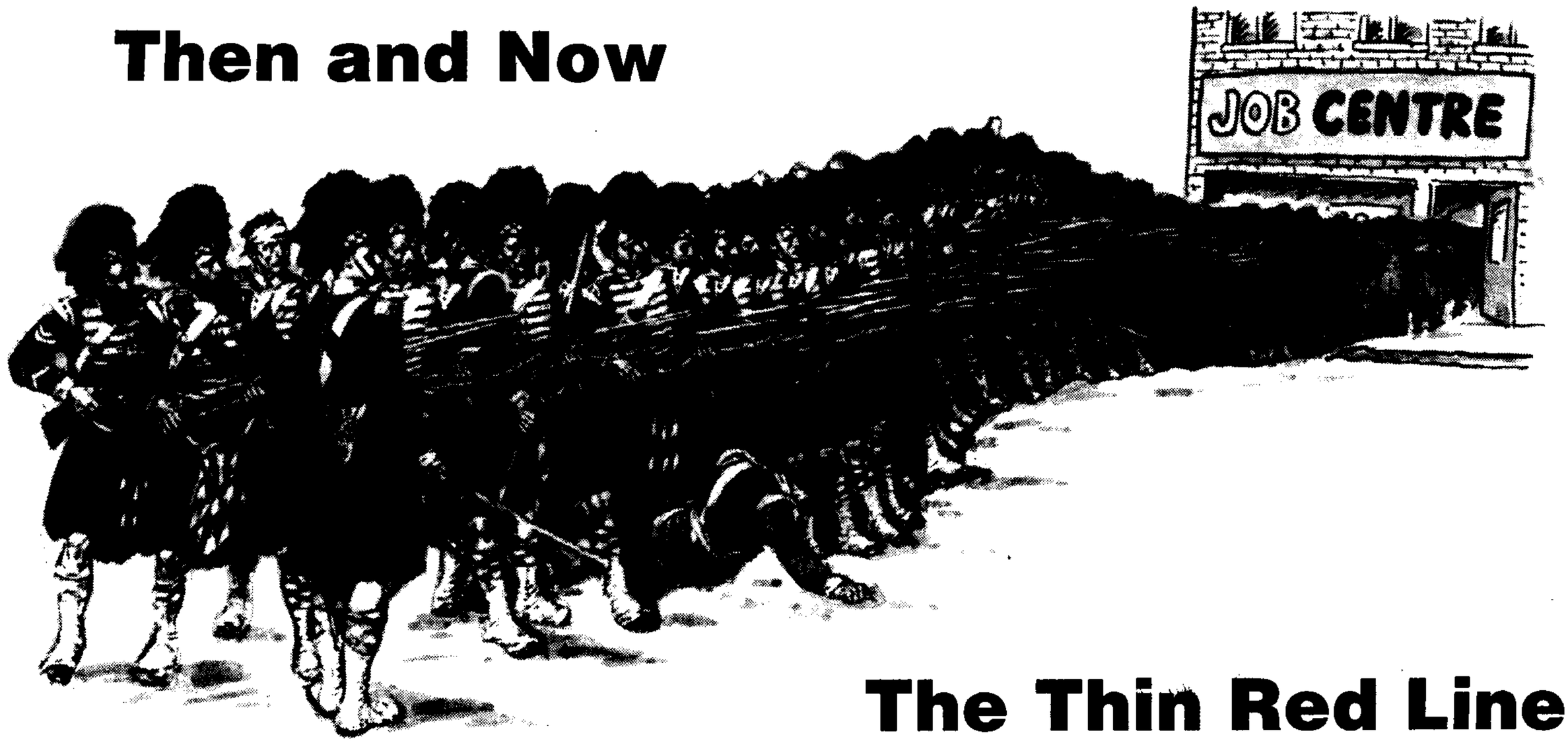
4. Proposed by our vicar, Rev. Purvis, a service of reconciliation in the village church, with special invitation extended to Mrs Brunnhilde Wadding-Smythe (née von Straubenzee) of the Manor House.

5. For the younger generation, eg the under-50s who cannot remember the great day, a grand D-Day disco evening (venue to be arranged)

Although the chairman (Lt Col B Frobisher) praised the imagination of all these suggestions, with the exception of the church service, which he said was entirely out of keeping with the spirit of Britain's great victory over the hated Boche, he proposed that in deference to the wishes of that great Englishwoman Dame Vera Lynn, our celebrations should perhaps take on a lower profile. He proposed that it would be more appropriate if all those wishing to remember The Few were to assemble on 6 June in a suitably solemn and reverent spirit in the saloon bar of the Lamb and Flag, for an "all-night vigil". This motion was passed by a large majority, and we commend the example we are setting to Mr Major and his cronies.

SIR H. GUSSETT
The Old Anderson Shelter
Haliborange, Dorset

Then and Now



The Thin Red Line

DIARY

Ooh-er. Crikey. It's your old mate Hunter's turn at the diary this week then is it? Blimey O'Reilly, as me old nan used to say. Oh, well. Hold on to your horses, chums. Here we go. Tee hee. Should be a chuckle.

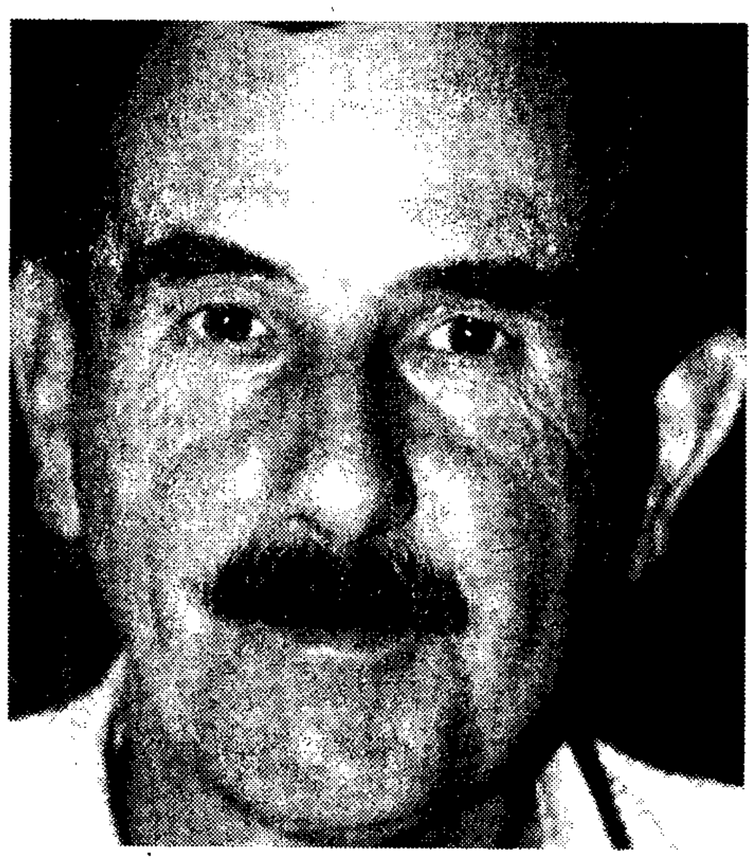
Did you see that Nelson Mandela on telly the other night, did you? Not half bad, that bloke. It doesn't seem long since I interviewed him in prison. So what you in 'ere for, me old mate, I asked him — driving offence, is it?

Turned out he said he was a prisoner of the South African Regine. Looked her up later and what do you know but she's a nightclub owner from Paris, bit overweight for my tastes say but not bad for a middle-aged bird. Fancy her locking him up all those years, eh? Bit kinky, or what?

So I said to him stuck there in prison, I said, look Nels, me old lad, haven't you got a bit of a bee in your bonnet about this apartheid wotsit? Just my luck — he started to bang on about freedom and equality. Becoming all philosophical on us, are we, I thought. Not now, Mandy. In my book too many long words is bad for the old indigestion. so I made my excuses. And vamoosed.

But not before I'd caught the flavour of the bloke. First of all, he's black — and why not? Second, he's a legend in his own lifetime, like my old mate Ringo Starr. And third, you can't help but admire him for sticking at it. Can't have been easy, and all that. And, you know what? These insights, what I jotted down in my little red book nearly twenty years ago, these insights still hold true today. Quite a nifty old Hunter, huh?

Insights. That's the name of the game in the interviewing game, I suppose you could say if you had half a mind. That, plus a command of the old mother tongue. English, good and proper. And snappy. What do I try to do when I do what I try to do when I do it then? Good question. Rightio, playmates. I'll try and give you an honesterooni answer. My very bestest interviews give you unexpected insights into the heart of the bloke — or bird! — what I've been interviewing. Sometimes, it means asking the questions no one else asks and catching the toffs and celebs on the hop. Like, when I was interviewing Professor (no less!) Ernst Gombrich in '78, I stopped him halfway through his first arty-farty reply and said: "Ernst — that's a funny name for a bloke! What happened to that second 'e' then — lost it somewhere did you, mate?" And that was when he told me it was the Australian spelling, and that he'd been born a baby on the Australian/Hungarian border. "You know something, Ernie — I thought it wasn't English," I said.



HUNTER DAVIES

And he looked positively amazed at my insight. Top marks for Hunter. Clever bugger, Ernst, I'll grant you, but a bit too brainy for the likes of us, eh?

"Pablo — that's a funny name! Anagram or something is it?" I remarked to the world famous painter Pablo Picasso when I met him back in the sixties. Cut the ice, and all that. Set him at his ease. Half the trick in this biz.

Dead nifty with a paint brush, Picasso. But as I said to him at the time, that one's got three eyes and something wonky going on with her neck, Pablo. And when was the last time you saw yellow fingers with green dots!? My own daughter Caitlin could do better than that. With her eyes closed. And she's only five. Might come out more realistic if you took up photography. Amazing what you can do with a Brownie these days, Pablo, providing you get the sun behind you and tell the little lady to say cheese. But would he listen? Would he heckers. Nice one, Pab.

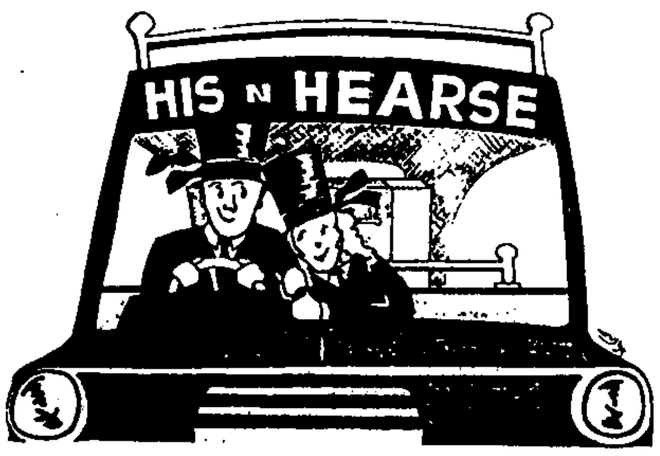
Books? You know the things, lots and lots of pages with lots of little wordies all over them and the author's name in great big swanky letters on the cover? You got it. Hole in one. Now you're with me. I'm a bit of a book factory. Can't stop it. Thirty-five bookies behind me at the last count. Literary biogs, mainly. Posh, huh?

What I'm working on now is a biog of Marcel Proust, the dead Frog writer with a moustache, bit like mine. Grrr. The copycat. You've got to have an angle in this game, and my angle is he's far more of an ordinary, decent sort of bloke than the namby-pamby elitist academic types have given him credit for. Cos in my opinion he wasn't French at all, he was much more straightforward than that, in my opinion he was born in the North West of England, Carlisle, that sort of area, and just put on a French accent p'raps to pull the birds. But enough of the blab. Judge for yourselves, mates, when it hits your bookstands: "An Eye for the Ladies: A Biography of Marcel Proust" by HUNTER DAVIES should be out come the autumn. One for the Chrissie stocking, eh, chums?

"Don't tell me you wouldn't prefer to be someone like Madonna or Cindy Crawford?" I asked Dame (if you will!) Iris Murdoch the last time I put my head round her tome-lined door. "Not really," she said. Ooooh — fibber! These brainy blue-stocking types really don't understand the half of it when it comes down to brass tacks. Hands up who's read the whole way through an Iris Murdoch? Thought so. There you have it. It's one thing to write one of her books. But it's another thing entirely to sit down and read it. Mind you, she makes a nice cuppa tea, does Iris, so I'm not complaining — and if she gets the Booker Prize and all that pompous claptrap, well, who's complaining? Not me. Honest. My books are for reading on a rainy day by the general public, not just for winning classy prizes. And anyway, Iris Murdoch never wrote the acclaimed authorised biography of The Beatles, now, did she, and she's not personal friends with Paul and she hasn't got a moustache and she's not known as the fifth Beatle, no, is she? So put that in your pipe and puff on it, Iris. Lovely lady, incidentally: very ordinary.

Went to the theatre last night. Very posh do. Classy progs. Plush seats. Curtain up. Yummy lollies in the interval. The lot. Hamlet, it was. Bit wordy. Not much action. Only decent bird goes and gets herself drowned. Set in Denmark. Of all places. So-called hero moons around doing bugger all for three hours. Not a single song you can hum. Yawn, yawn. Can't see it catching on. Much prefer that Meldrew character on the goggle-box. Worra laugh, eh?

A lot of people write. To me. No kidding. And they ask. How can I write. Like you. Blah blah blah. And guess what. My advice is. Don't stint on the full stops. Everyone loves a full stop. Specially if it signals the end of one of my articles. Nice one, Hunt. Must rush. Kissy kissy. Nuff said.



ARE there any genuine men out there, who would like to write to an attractive, single nun, 35. Must be non-smoker, honest and caring with a good sense of humour. Must like children. Please send photo. All letters answered. —

Bradford Telegraph & Argus

MARITAL ARTS INSTRUCTORS. Exp. Northern CA organization in major expansion. F/T or P/T. Fax resume to: 415-567-5287.

San Francisco Chronicle

18.00
Calcio: Blackbum-Manchester Utd
Campionato inglese

Giornale di Sicilia

Literary Review

Stuck in the Maya

Wouldn't take nothing for my journey now
Maya Angelou
(Virago, £9.99)

MAYA ANGELOU is, of course, beyond criticism. Female, black, famously a victim of child abuse — anything less than total respect would be right out of order, wouldn't it?

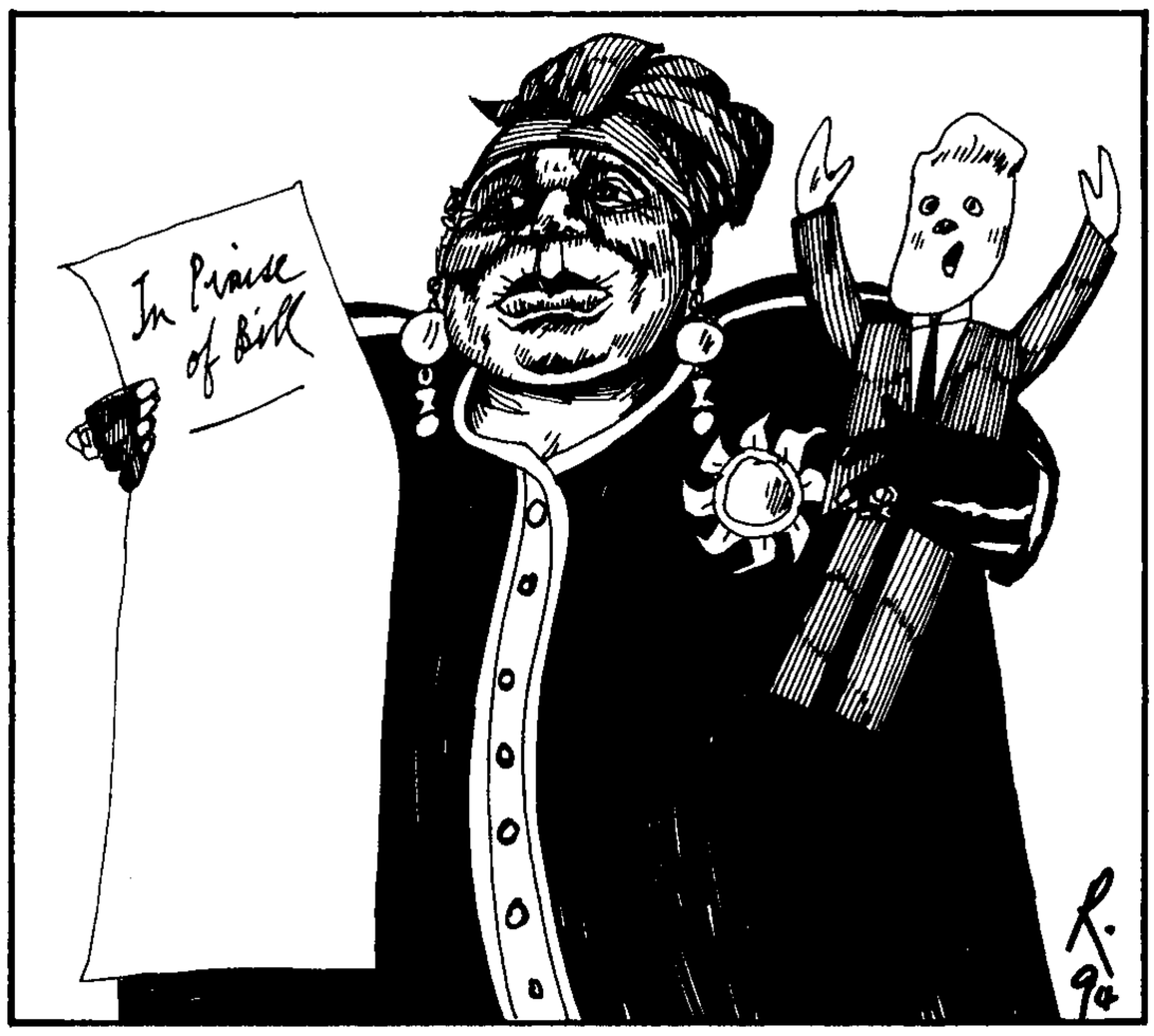
Besides Maya Angelou is the bestselling female American black writer. She holds a lifetime university chair. As she likes to tell interviewers, her books are "required reading at every university in the United States". She declaimed a poem called "On the Pulse of the Morning" at President Clinton's inauguration. She knows why the caged bird sings. What's more, she's Diane Abbott's heroine.

What then can we possibly say about this book? *Wouldn't take nothing for my journey now* consists of 24 "lessons for living" — little three- or four-page sermons on how to live and what to do, drawing on her experience of life. It's the gospel according to Maya.

The wee problem is that, from beginning to end, it's so pitifully stupid, so ludicrously dire, that you think Angelou must somehow have been tricked into writing it by her worst enemy, no doubt a racist white male, if not a wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. But apparently not: apparently it was the idea of her dear friend Oprah Winfrey, to whom the book is dedicated "with immeasurable love". She's the party guilty of encouraging Angelou to believe that she is a woman of infinite wisdom.

It's the cruellest thing she could have done. For, unfortunately, Maya Angelou is somewhere between one-tenth and one-twelfth as clever as she thinks she is. And this book's the incontrovertible proof, now and forever. Not for years have such banalities been delivered with such pomposity. Mr Pooter, of *The Diary of a Nobody*, could have composed a better collection of "Thoughts and Reflections" than this. Patience Strong herself would have dismissed these little platitudes as falling below her quality control level. Any self-respecting calendar publisher or greetings card printer would resign rather than print this tripe.

But not Virago Press. Its proud motto runs: Never mind the quality, feel the victimhood. Accordingly, Virago has done up these negligible witterings as a natty little volume, with Angelou's martyred phiz, under some kind of lurid turban, looming large on the cover. This, says Virago, is the "first work of prose for many years" from "one of our best-loved writers". "As lessons in living, they are a unique inspiration." Go thou and do otherwise, perhaps?



To be sure, Angelou addresses the big subjects. Women, for example: "Women should be tough, tender, laugh as much as possible, and live long lives," she counsels. Righty-ho! That's sorted that one out. Next? Time. "Since time is the one immaterial object which we cannot influence — neither speed up nor slow down, add to, nor diminish — it is an imponderably valuable gift," the seer sagely remarks. Indeed, indeed, time and tide wait for no man, no time like the present, what?

Then there's travel. Broadens the mind, eh? Rather. Or as Maya tells us from the height of her insight: "Human beings are more alike than unalike, and what is true anywhere is true everywhere, yet I encourage travel to as many destinations as possible for the sake of education as well as pleasure." Oh you do, do you? Thanks.

Marvellous thing, travel. Chaps abroad often speak a different lingo, you see, makes you think, rather. Maya agrees: "I do know... that being exposed to the existence of other languages increases the perception that the world is populated by people who not only speak differently from oneself but whose cultures and philosophies are other than one's own." Absolutely. You wouldn't believe some of the things the fuzzy-wuzzies used to get up to in the old days. Ooops! Pardon me!

And then there's clothes. Got to look the part, you see. "Seek the fashion which truly fits and befits you," suggests Maya, as opposed presumably to the one that doesn't fit or befit you, best steered clear of. Sound advice. Choosing the right drapes works a treat for her, she says. "If I feel good inside my skin and clothes, I am thus free to allow my body its natural grace, its natural gesture. Then I am so comfortable that whatever I wear looks good on me even to the external fashion arbiters." Course it does, Maya, course it does. Love the hat!

Then there's that regular poser, death. What happens to people when they're dead? Hard to say for sure, isn't it? Surprisingly, Angelou considers this question only to say that even she — yes, even Maya Angelou! — doesn't know the answer for certain. "I find surcease from the entanglements of questions only when I concede that I am not obliged to know everything. In a world where many desperately seek to know all the answers, it is not very popular to believe, and then state, I do not need to know all things." Whatever you say, Maya, you know best.

For, as you say, God's on your side. "That knowledge humbles me, melts my bones, closes my ears, and makes my teeth rock loosely in their gums." Actually, that's probably just a top-flight hangover, but never mind, it gets you going, apparently. You're full of Spirit, you say. "I am a big bird winging over high mountains, down into serene valleys. I am ripples of waves on silver seas. I'm a spring leaf trembling in anticipation." Very nice too, though not all at the same time, I hope, and do get somebody else to drive you home, won't you?

We're on your side too, you know. We all want to think you're not just a great victim of discrimination but a good, or a least halfway decent, or just ordinarily competent, writer too. But give us a hand — don't make it so difficult.

Books & Bookmen

THE queen mother may have withdrawn her imprimatur from Hatchards in Piccadilly, but the annual authors of the year party went ahead as usual last Wednesday.

Surprisingly, new chief executive Bill McGrath, in the tradition of displaced chief executive and architect of the Pentos empire, Terry Maher, received his guests after they had absurdly been announced on the shopfloor by the same red jacketed toast master who did the honours last year.

There were far fewer guests than before. Even a few members of the Longford clan seemed to be absent. Lord Archer left early — and not, Bookworm is sure, because he anticipated the arrival of Kitty Kelley. Mercifully, there seemed to be no publishers.

Poor Bill McGrath looked rather gloomy although that may be his natural demeanour. Perhaps this was because a disingenuous, or ludicrous, article in the *Sunset Times* in April suggested that Pentos' figures, whether profit or loss, have been "guessed at" for some time. This, naturally, is untenable; but the fact that Pentos in its various subsidiaries employs three different and irreconcilable computer systems doesn't make it easy for poor Mr McGrath to establish what is going on. No wonder 185 individuals were made redundant from Dillons last week.

'Bookworm'

● **SEVENTIES** evening dresses, choice of five, 2 indian type cotton, 1 patterned velvet, 2 flowery cotton with lace, all long, size 12-14, unworn and in perfect condition, would be excellent for fancy dress etc, £6 - £25, no male callers

Bristol Trade it

footnotes

The Stephen Lawrence murder

SERGEANT'S MESS

WHY WAS the murder charge against a man who had been identified as the killer of south London black student Stephen Lawrence so inexplicably dropped? Fresh information which has reached the *Eye* suggests that the police case was mysteriously wrecked — by a police officer.

The mystery intensified after a short item on Channel Four's legal programme, *The Brief*, on 26 April. A young man, who appeared in silhouette, said he was with Stephen when he was attacked, and clearly saw the killers. He said he had picked out one of the killers at an identity parade. This was confirmed by crown prosecution service (CPS) papers leaked to *The Brief*.

Immediately after this positive identification, two men were charged with the murder. The papers went to the CPS. But on 29 July, a few days before the men were due to be committed for trial, the case was dropped.

Stephen's funeral, June '93: Why are his murderers still at large?

How could such a sensitive case be dropped after such a positive identification? Part of the answer comes from information provided for the *Eye* by the witness who appeared on the programme but for obvious reasons does not want to be identified.

He says he attended three identification parades. The first was on 7 May, two weeks after the murder. For reasons which were not explained to him, the parade was suddenly abandoned. The second parade was on 13 May, when he picked out the suspect. The third was held three weeks later, on 3 June.

After that parade, a police officer, whom the witness names as Det Sgt Crowley of Plumstead CID and who was not involved in the Lawrence inquiry, drove him home. In the car, says the witness, there was a conversation about the case and how much the witness knew about the killers. The conversation, according to the witness, grew quite heated.

That same evening, 3 June, two police officers from the Lawrence inquiry, which is based at Eltham police station, visited the witness. They said a statement had been taken from the sergeant about the conversation in the car which cast doubt on the witness's credibility. They asked him to make a statement, which he refused to do that evening.

The following morning two officers from the Lawrence murder inquiry visited the witness at the hostel where he was staying. He says they showed him Sgt Crowley's statement about the conversation in the car in which he, the witness, was alleged to have suggested that he could not properly recognise Stephen's attackers. He promptly made a statement bitterly refuting the sergeant's account of the conversation.

This information may well explain the sudden decision to drop the case in spite of the positive identification. The CPS may well have concluded that the positive identification was refuted by the police officer's statement and that the identification evidence might not stand up in court. Indeed, the witness confirms that he was rung up by a senior officer from the Lawrence inquiry with the news that the Crowley statement had "mucked up" the identification. If so, this must be one of the very few murder cases in the history of Scotland Yard in which the credibility of a vital identification witness for the police and the prosecution has been rubbished by a policeman.

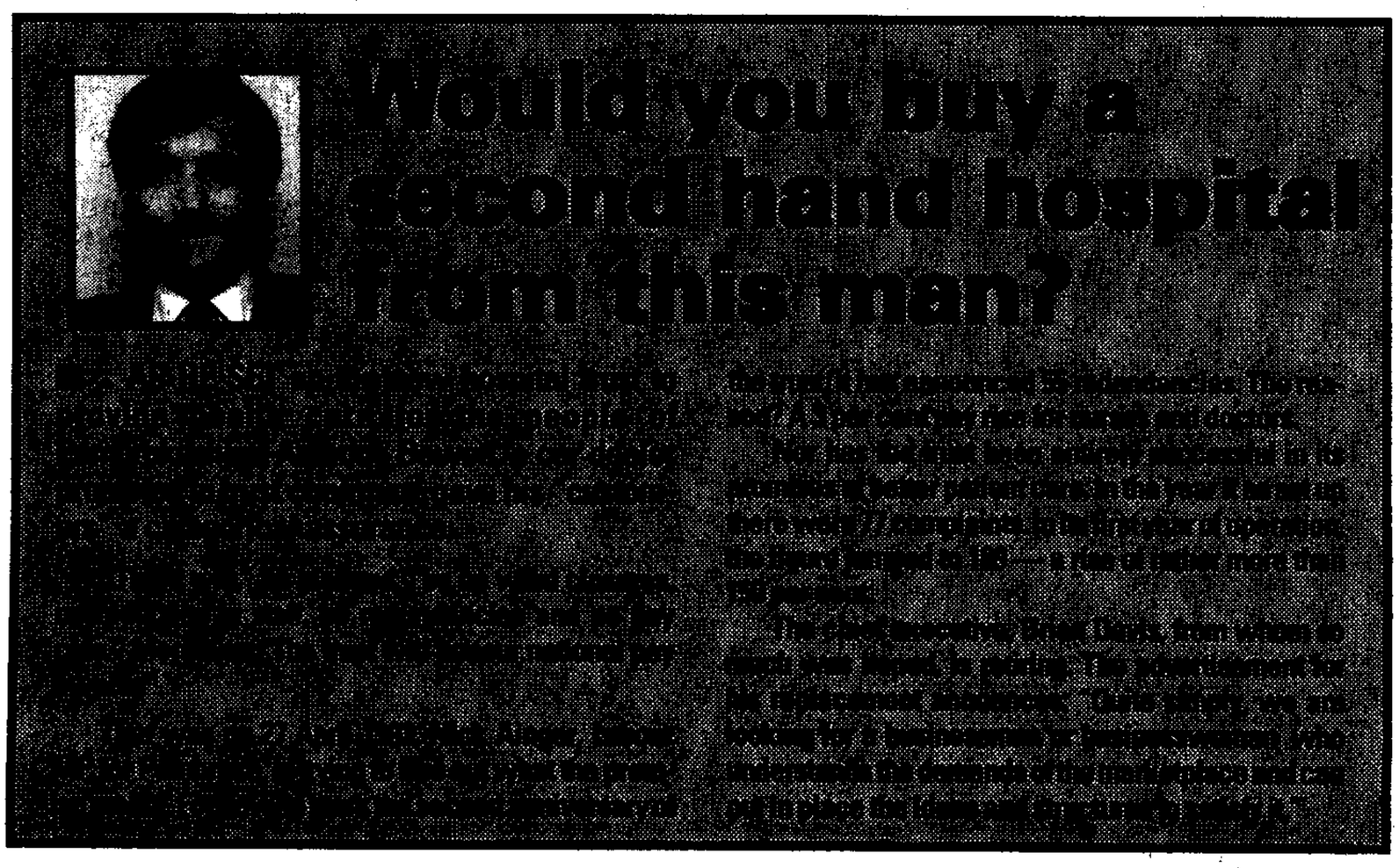
The *Eye* put this whole story to Scotland Yard and to the CPS. Scotland Yard confirmed that it has an officer, DS Christopher Crowley, at Plumstead police station, and said: "All statements relevant to such cases are automatically forwarded to the CPS for their consideration."

A CPS spokeswoman said: "I can't discuss the details of this particular case." She added: "The dangers of wrong identification evidence have been highlighted in many cases" — and she quoted one (in 1963) to prove it.

THE THINGS THEY SAY

"He was Lear, Othello, Hamlet, Brutus all rolled into one."

—Jonathan Aitken, Defence Minister, speaking about Richard Nixon, who was thrown out of the White House for corruption. The Week in Westminster, BBC Radio 4, April 30.



SLEAZY RYDER

■ **THE VERY righteous Sue Ryder Foundation has had a little trouble with its not so righteous representatives in Africa.**

The Sue Ryder Foundation of Malawi decided to spend some money on health care in the Balaka area, and built four houses there. The building contract went to a company called Littleways whose chairman was John Loga, chairman of the, er, Sue Ryder Foundation of Malawi.

The houses were gerrybuilt and now have to be put right. Asked if the cost of this little calamity might be in the region of £40,000, the Sue Ryder Foundation's very expensive lawyers, Bates, Wells and Braithwaite, admitted the conflict of interest, admitted that the paperwork in connection with the contract was "by any standards seriously inadequate" and admitted that John Loga was no longer their chairman.

"The notion that £40,000 was misappropriated," they concluded, was "not borne out" by the foundation's "conscientious investigations". The Charity Commissioners are investigating as well.

View from the bridge

IT WAS worth a trip to the lord chief justice's court on 19 April to observe the desperate efforts of prosecutor Tim Barnes QC to suppress evidence which contradicted the central point of the prosecution case which in 1989 convicted Eddie Browning of the M50 murder.

Browning was arrested because he drove a silver, C registration Renault 25 and there was some (but not much) evidence that the murderer of Marie Wilks was driving such a car.

Though he vigorously denied ever being on the M50 on the day of the murder, and though the case against him was thin (for instance there was no identifiable blood in his car in which the murdered woman was said to have been kidnapped, her jugular vein cut by a knife), he was brought to trial.

He said that on the day of the murder he had crossed the Severn Bridge. The prosecution produced photographs taken from the videos of the cameras on the Severn Bridge and proudly boasted that from 7pm to 7.45pm on the evening of the murder no Renault 25 had crossed the bridge. The defence, hampered by legal aid problems, had to rely on photographs provided by the prosecution and could not effectively damage this powerful prosecution point.

After the case was referred to the court of appeal, Browning's lawyers went back to the original video and subjected it to high-technology tests. With the help of these tests, Mr Hector Mackenzie-Wintle, one of the country's leading experts on Renault cars, identified a Renault 25 with its sun-roof open (as Browning always said his was) crossing the bridge at 7.36pm — at almost exactly the time Marie Wilks was abducted on the M50 motorway.

Whoops! The prosecution's firm assurance that there was no Renault on the bridge between 7pm and 7.45 was refuted. But now the prosecution sought to reject the new evidence on the grounds that Browning, on his own account of his driving speed, was more likely to have been at the bridge a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes earlier.

Earnestly and ponderously Mr Barnes tried to convince the lord chief justice that the disclosure of a possible Renault at a time when the original prosecution said there wasn't a Renault was against the interests of justice.

This was too much for the judges, who allowed the new evidence. Mackenzie-Wintle was firm that the car was a Renault 25. A prosecution expert questioned his certainty. But a further piece of evidence which backed Browning's story was, astonishingly, not admitted by the judges.

INNOCENT IN CUSTODY? Eddie Browning (left)

Browning had said in his original interview with police that while crossing the bridge he had seen men working above. The official transcript of the tape of the interview had him saying: "They was [*sic*] men working above on the big staunchens [*sic*] on the centre pieces of the bridge."

This was vague. There were frequently men working on the bridge stanchions at different times of the day. The point was not considered significant and was not raised by the defence at the trial. But this time Browning's new lawyer listened to the tape again. In it, Browning says something slightly but crucially different. He says: "There were men working up above on the big staunchions [*sic*] and on the centre piece of the bridge." The new word "and" described two separate groups of workers: one on the stanchions and one on the centre piece; and the vague "pieces" had become the more specific "piece".

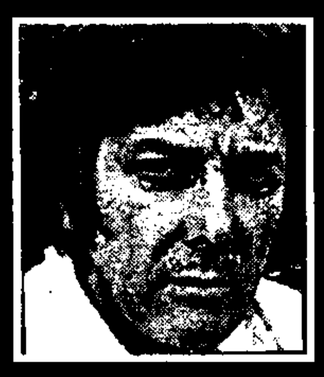
A statement was taken from Mr Alan Platt, an engineer responsible for work on the bridge at the time. Mr Platt studied his notes of his workers' movements on 18 June 1988, the date of the murder. The notes show, and Mr Platt confirmed, that there were indeed men working on the stanchions that evening, on a Saturday evening overtime shift. Then Mr Platt confirmed that, after finishing a task, some of his men crossed the centre piece of the bridge 80 metres up. *This happened only once in the entire evening — between 7.40 and 7.45.*

Mr Platt also confirmed that a man driving from Wales to England could have seen his men as they crossed. Allowing for a lane closure (which Browning also mentioned and which was not instituted until 6.40 that evening) the car now identified as a Renault which approached the bridge at 7.36 would have been under the centre piece between 7.40 and 7.45, at exactly the time the workmen were crossing it. The precision of this coincidence did not impress the lord chief justice, who refused even to hear the evidence of Mr Platt on the grounds that the defence could have called him at the trial.

The judges reserved their judgment, which is expected soon.

PS: Mr Barnes was supported throughout the hearing by his junior counsel, William Coker. Mr Coker prepared the case against the four men convicted in 1979 of killing the newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater; and appeared again for the prosecution when their case was referred to the court of appeal, and their appeal dismissed, in 1988/9. Mr Coker's long and earnest work for the crown in these contested cases has at last been recognised. He has been promoted to QC.

ROGER THE DODGER



■ ROGER WOODHOUSE cut a dashing figure when he fought West Bromwich East for the Tories in the 1987 general election. He drove *two* Porsches -- a white one on weekdays and a black one on Sundays.

Diners at his glamorous restaurant — Leverets on the M5 motorway island — were constantly informed that their host was fighting on three slogans to "save the nation": chuck out blacks, extend free enterprise and hang criminals. None of these policies seems to have saved Mr Woodhouse, who lost the election.

Mr Woodhouse was in court last week, charged with deception. He'd opened an account at the First Direct bank in the name of man who was dead. Roger knew he was dead because (as an accountant) he'd just settled his will.

Woodhouse was convicted but not hanged. He was held in custody, awaiting sentence at Wolverhampton crown court.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

1) "I went to Rio for the day once, not so much for environmentally-friendly reasons but more to help British industry to export weapons of mass destruction. I regret that I was unsuccessful in securing the necessary contact."

— Neil Hamilton, minister for corporate affairs and former Young Conservative observer at the conference of the Italian Fascist Party, MSI, speaking in the Commons standing committee F on the deregulation and contracting bill. *Hansard, February 24th.*

2) Mr Cohen: To ask the President of the Board of Trade on what date the Under-Secretary for Corporate Affairs visited Rio; what weapons he was attempting to sell; which country he was attempting to sell them to; and which companies he was assisting.

Mr Neil Hamilton: I have made no ministerial visits to Brazil.

— Written questions, House of Commons. Hansard, 27 April.

You can write to Paul Foot at 8 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 071 287 3163

In the City

THE FIRST anniversary of Asil Nadir's flight to his new prison in Northern Cyprus is expected to produce further bluster from the Polly Peck fraudster in his war of words with the Serious Farce Office and former friends in the Tory party.

So far the threatened Watergate-style revelations have produced no revelations at all, while the promised legal actions are still awaited.

Meanwhile it is worth considering the implications for embarrassed Tories of an interesting memo which has surfaced from the Nadir files. Written by Nadir's chief private facilitator Elizabeth Forsyth, it refers to Operation Protocol: the codename for a plan to ensure Nadir obtained the title he coveted and almost achieved.

One of the key elements of Operation Protocol involved targeting senior Tory politicians who could be recruited to the Sir Asil/Lord Nadir cause. To this aim information (or was it "dirt"?) was to be collected as a way of selecting the most likely allies.

Another essential ingredient of Operation Protocol was Nadir's profligate use of £440,000 of Polly Peck money to boost party coffers — the time honoured post-Lloyd George Tory way of buying honours. That generosity had already ensured that Nadir had made six visits to Downing Street since 1984 by the time the Forsyth memo was written. Such visits made sure Nadir came to meet and greet the right people.

One of those reputedly approached to help in Operation Protocol was none other than the ever fragrant Lady Olga Maitland — not that she would have been party to any dirt ditching. Lady Olga was then working for the *Sunday Express* but awaiting the call to the Temple of Truth as MP for Sutton in the 1992 election.

Interestingly enough, shortly after the Polly Peck bubble burst in October 1990, Lady Olga penned an extremely well informed item about "How Sir Polly Peck lost out over title". It revealed that "establishment figures", including politicians, had written recommending Nadir for an honour as part of a campaign, run by Forsyth, launched the previous year. It also gave the first information about Nadir's political contributions mentioning £300,000.

The article disclosed a Downing Street letter replying that Mrs Thatcher would give the recommendation of an honour for the generous fraudster "full and careful consideration". None other than party chairman Kenneth Baker was said to have sought his advice.

Today Lady Olga is less forthcoming about Nadir, although there is no suggestion that she was involved in any impropriety. After Nadir fled, the tyro MP declined to discuss whether she might have been among the eight MPs who took up his case with the attorney-general — only four have been identified.

Other Tory MPs might ponder that not only the proposed beneficiary but also the architect of Operation Protocol are now in Northern Cyprus along with the files and their letters. That is unless and until, Ronnie Knight style, Nadir is prepared to take the risk of a voluntary return to fight the SFO.

THE freefall in the shares of business information group MAID, almost halved from the March flotation price of 110p to 69p, must be disconcerting for sponsors Hill Samuel and Hoare Govett. Especially as there are now rumours that a major contract may be in jeopardy and that all may be less than sweetness and light in the MAID boardroom.

History relates that whenever a price behaves like MAID in such a short period, something is very seriously wrong. Unlike when a share is being chased up, those who are selling usually do know something.

THAT Standard Chartered has finally run out of patience with Peter de Savary and put in the receivers to one of his key companies, Placeton, is no surprise. The question is: what took them so long?

For at least two years de Savary has been sinking under a bank debt estimated to be somewhere north of £100 million spread among his various companies. Efforts to sell property and hotel assets in Britain and the United States have been largely unsuccessful. Yet Standard Chartered, his main banker, has continued to wait for a miracle which was never going to come. Now it has bitten a £50 million bullet by de Savary's own reckoning.

But the other question is: what was Standard Chartered doing lending to "UnSavoury" in the first place? This is especially relevant as several years ago Standard Chartered's merchant banking arm declined to act for him on the grounds of his City reputation, which an internal memo described as "discouraging".

The truth is that like other winners such as less than Gorgeous George Walker, Standard Chartered was desperate to be a player in the boom of the late 80s and was only too ready to go where other banks either feared to tread or were in retreat. And once in, it was impossible to get out.

With "UnSavoury" and Walker, Standard Chartered learned the power of Keynes' law (updated): if you owe the bank £1,000 you are at its mercy; if you owe the bank £100 million, it is at your mercy.

BANKING regulators and police in several countries including Britain have developed an interest in Capital International Bank & Trust, a more than generous lender with an unusually colourful history and some very tasty connections.

Capital has been linked to loan deals involving up to $250 million and has also been in the deposit taking business. All the more remarkable when it is considered that three years ago the US treasury sent out a warning about its activities. At that time Capital was incorporated on a Kiowa Indian reservation in Oklahoma! How appropriate, therefore, that among those connected with the bank was one Chief Two Feathers.

The state authorities are understood to have taken action to close down Capital's operations, but about two years ago the bank resurfaced in Europe, now seemingly relocated in the Caribbean.

Capital has featured in dubious deals in Ireland and Belgium tied not only to longtime fraudsmen but also to businessmen known to be active in fundraising for the IRA. One theory is that now Capital is off the reservation it is a renegade bank used not just for fraudulent schemes but also as a conduit for money laundering.

THE conviction of Nazmu Virani on charges of deceiving BCCI's auditors is much needed good news for the SFO's battered reputation.

It may not, however, impress Anthony Scrivener's other well known client, Asil Nadir, in the infallibility of the QC's judgement. (The eminent brief, by the way, would like us to know that he did not spend Easter advising Nadir in Northern Cyprus on his legal affairs.)

Virani, like so many innocent suits before him, did not give evidence. Post the disgraceful leniency shown towards insurance conman Roger Levitt (community service) and failed spivs Terry Ramsden and Tony Cole (suspended sentences), the City will wait to see whether Mr Justice Hutchinson delivers on his forecast that a prison sentence "appeared inevitable" for similar "technical" offences.

The Virani "result" has improved the SFO's position as it awaits the outcome of the review by attorney-general Sir Nicholas Lyell. An acquittal could have been fatal in the struggle to head off a takeover by the Crown Prosecution Service and its fraud investigation group (FIG). But it is still very much a case of one down, another BCCI plus Brent Walker and, most important of all, Maxwell to go.

The SFO also faces the problem of a declining caseload of serious frauds. It is now desperately gathering up undistinguished cases from provincial forces that it would have rejected only a year ago. The policy is clearly to look busy and justify its £21 million annual budget. Whether that will head off the expected merger with FIG remains to be seen. So too does who will run the merged organisation and whether an experienced criminal prosecutor will take day to day charge, replacing the civil lawyers and accountants who currently run the seriously flawed operation.

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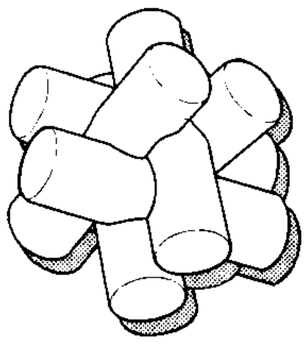

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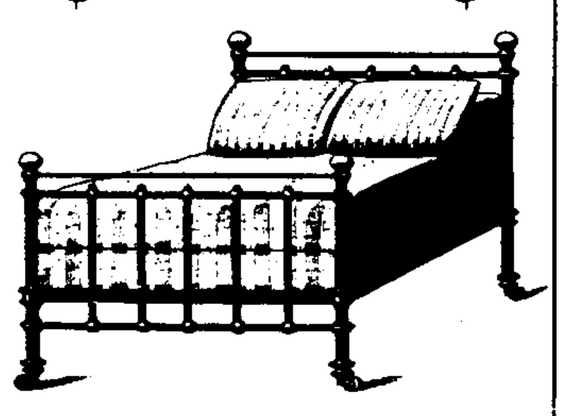

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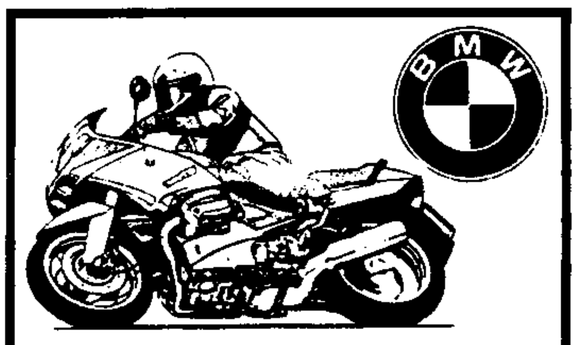

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Quote of the week:

Mr Mandela laid a wreath on the tomb of the African National Congress's founding President, John Dube, on route to the polling station at Inanda. The inscription on the tombstone read "Out of the darkness into the glorious light". When he arrived at the ballot box he was asked which party he planned to vote for. "I have been agonising over that question," he replied.

Independent

NOTICE TO ASPIRING cartoonists. Please include a stamped addressed envelope with your roughs and send them to the editor, Private Eye, 6 Carlisle St, London W1. Faxed roughs 437 0705. (Could cartoonist who signs himself 'Haws' let us know his address.)

SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray. See "Eye Help".

MOOMOO meet Grosvenor noon my Birthday BOPHY BEAR.

THE BRIDGEWATER FOUR are innocent, can't they see that? Kim, aged 9.

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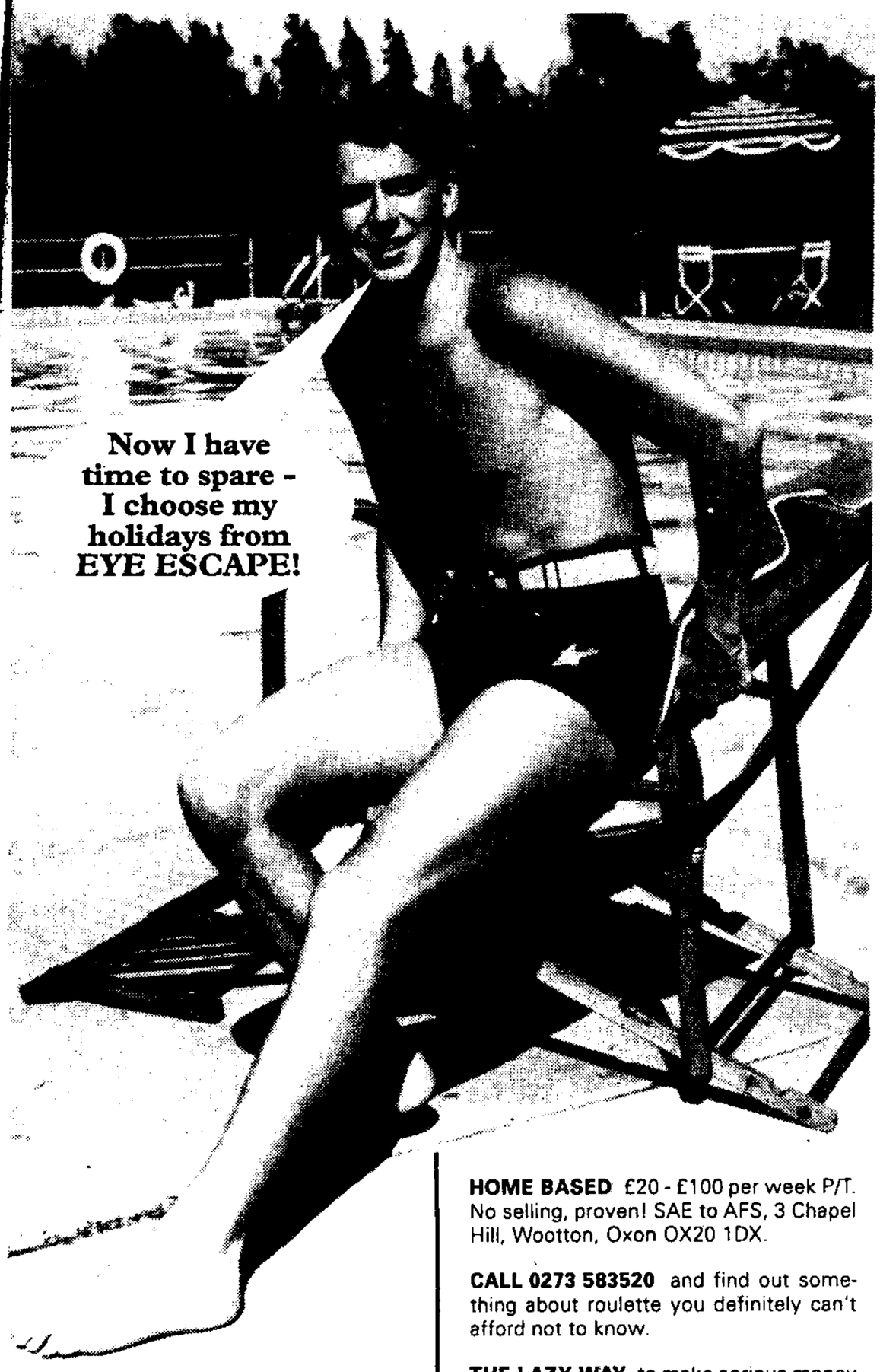

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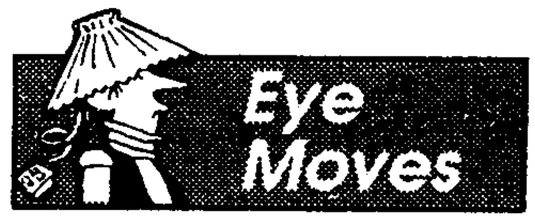

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WITTY WOMAN, 52, 47 with dimples and delightful personality wants to be spoilt rotten by a nice man. Box 2045.

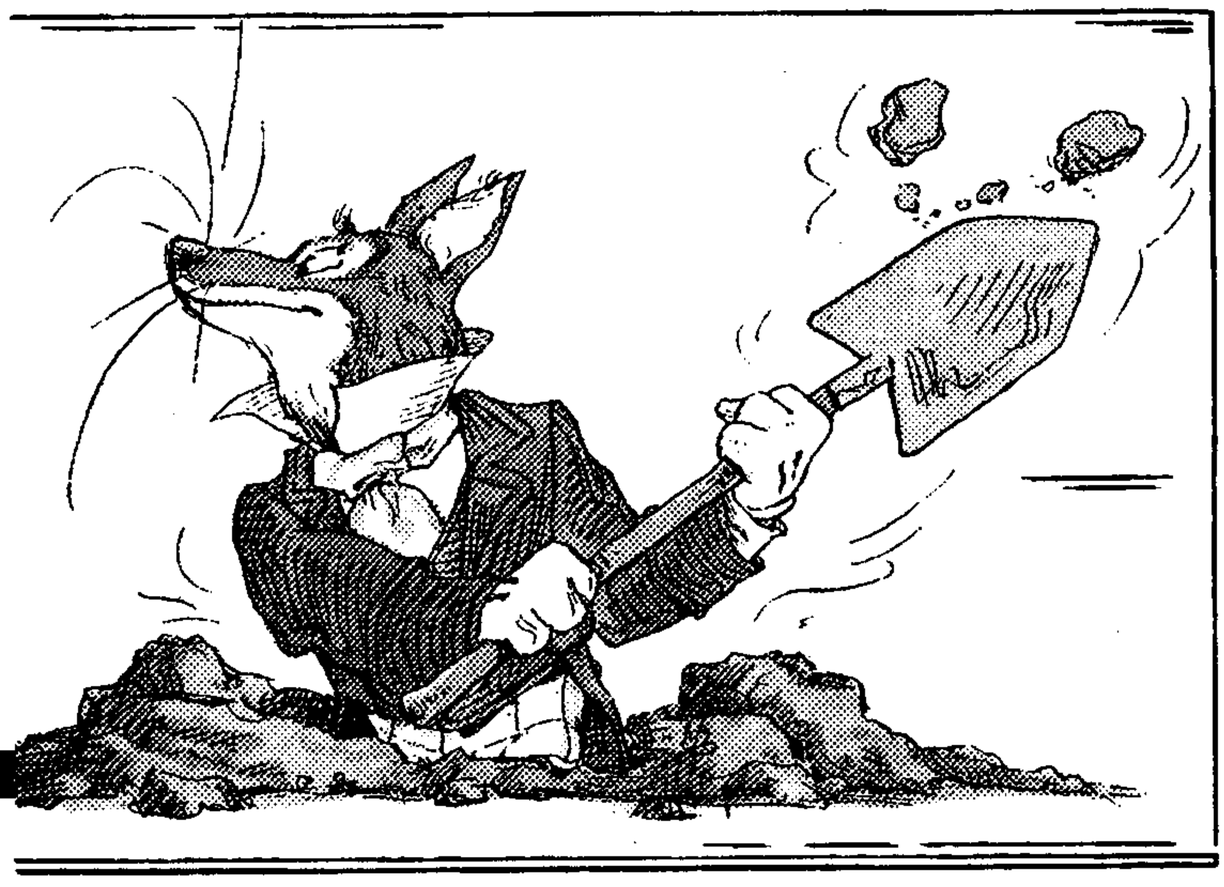
SPRING IS SPRUNG, de grass is riz, I wonder where de boidies is? Unattached graduate male, 26, n/s, solvent, own house in Cambridge, seeks uninhibited, lively, renoiresque lady between 20ish and 30ish with an interest in the good things in life including the free ones. No bimbos, tories, religious types or nicotine fiends. Photo appreciated. Box 2145.

TASTY FILLY seeks Bic-witted ironist. Box 2245.

ATTACHED MALE FRIEND 50 or over sought by London woman. Box 2345.

DAMSEL, YOUNG 50, seeks honest knight for TLC and laughter. East Sussex Kent area. Box 2445.

ARE YOU FEMALE, romantic, sensual, unafraid? then please help this silly man. Lonely oldie (46) lost in London. Not ugly, not weird — just ridiculously shy. Photo appreciated. Box 2545.



SINGLE MALE, 37, into books, theatre, cinema, travel, music, seeks attractive, intelligent, mature and sexy woman to share good things in life. ALA. Box 6645.

RICH, WELL-DRESSED MID 30s
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and to accompany on holidays to
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ATTRACTIVE, PETITE honey blonde 30-something wishes to meet 6'+ solvent, intelligent, affectionate professional gentleman, age 45-60, fit, good sense of humour, non-smoker for adventure, travel, dining out, theatre and friendship, and of course, lots more. Photo would be appreciated. Central London or South East. Box 2745.

GORGEOUS, GRACEFUL, amusing, intelligent writer seeks witty wise man, 38ish, with height/hair/heart for comparing notes. Further comparisons for those with beautiful eyes/mouth/soul. Portrait/prose please. Box 7045

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FUNNY, FIT, nice, attached guy, 35, seeks under-utilised woman for raw, safe passion. London. Photo, 'phone appreciated. Box 4545.

STYLISH UNDERGRADUATE (21) seeks relationship with sensual lady for youthful fun, adventure, tenderness and intimacy. Let's sip champagne and plan the future! Box 4645.

TALL, DARK, HANDSOME, successful, kind, quirky, deeply modest optimist (33¾) seeks warm, sparky, younger woman for meaningful nothingness. Oxfordshire. Box 4745.

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CONVEXITY CONNOISSEUR seeks beguiling bosom's owner (35-55) for jiving, and amusing ardent loyal libidinous London relationship respecting independence. Photograph appreciated. Box 5045.

TALL, ELEGANT LADY. Early 50s. Loosely attached, seeks charming, hopefully unattached gentleman for enduring friendship with passion. No strings. n/s. 5'10"+. South London, SE Kent. Box 5445.

BRILLIANT, INDUSTRIOUS, self-indulgent, egocentric, solvent, good-looking and unassuming young man seeks more fun. You are under 30, tall, leggy and wild. Photo vital. Box 5545.

ATTRACTIVE West London "newish" man, 38, would like to hear from any sincere, attractive women out there who would actually be happily married with kids! Box 5645.

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ARNO SEEKS JOYCE, for Drops into the Fold. Box 6045.

GENEROUS, FRIENDLY, reliable divorced designer, 52, 5'5" wants compatible woman with warm glow. London/Bath. Box 6145.

CONTINENTAL, PROFESSIONAL male, 42, married, seeks young-ish attractive lady for romantic lunches etc in London's most glamorous establishments. Photo appreciated. Box 6245.

TALL, BLOND MALE, 39, married seeks sensual lady with own place for erotic fun. West Yorkshire. Box 6345.

MALE GRADUATE, 25, seeks intelligent female interested in computers perhaps. Box 6445.

SCORPIO MALE, fit, reasonably attractive, 30s, aquamaniac seeks soulmate/magic. Piscean perhaps? South. Box 6545.

HETERA, at her apex, seeks solvent philosopher for permanent discourse. Box 7145.

INTELLIGENT professional, based Cheshire/Staffs, all round nice guy, 38, seeks warm clever female who probably won't reply! Box 3045

PRETTY WOMAN, 27, seeks mature male, 6' plus, for uncomplicated fun. Watford/Kent/South East. Box 3145

CENTRAL AFRICA? Eye seek Jane, slim, warm, 35ish, intelligent, attractive, solvent, adventurous to share expat lifestyle. Eye am 56, 5ft 9in, re-cycled executive into water, golf, Pavarotti, art, food, fun. Foto appreciated. Box 3245.

GREEN-EYED WRITER TDH (30) quiet, sensitive, honest and reliable seeks intelligent sensitive woman 20-30 for long-term relationship. Bristol/South West. Photo and phone? Box 3345.

NICE GUY: 42... Highgate home, Dorset cottage. Tall/slim/clean-cut/fit. Good natured, many interests. Seeking woman, 20s-40s, who wants to build and share life. Box 3445.

MALE ADRENALINE rush addict (20s) seeks similar female for excellent adventures. Box 3545.

FRUSTRATED COMEDIAN, male, 36, seeks woman for cuddles. Let's make each other laugh. Box 3645.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, 45, married, educated, solvent, with good sense of humour. Seeks married lady for discreet friendship. London and South East. Box 3745.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, 42, graduate, young-looking, seeks attractive sincere, intelligent female, photo requested. Box 3845.

WANTED: academic, egalitarian, employed, healthy, intellectual, non-smoking, philosophical, sexually confident, very intelligent, vigorous man in his fifties — for loving. All long, serious letters answered. Box 3945.

MALE 32, 5'11" All bits in working order with no ties or hang ups, seeks wonderful woman for wonderful times to give me an excuse to banish microwave meals and M&S ocean pies for ever. Long letter and photo appreciated. North West. Box 4045.

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WHITE FEMALE, 28, loves plenty of cuddles, looking for a male aged up to 33, and must be affectionate Ring 0660 207692

BLACK CANADIAN, gsoh, easygoing and sincere, loves attractive women for fun and friendship, if you're curious to know what I'm like, call me. Ring 0660 208654

BIG LADY, 36, reasonable looks, good company, caring, enjoys most things in life, seeks male for sharing good and bad times. Ring 0660 207674

VIBRANT, warm and witty female, youngish 40, slim, attractive, seeks solvent gentleman, with good sense of humour, romantic, down to earth, 40-55. Ring 0660 205229

COMPANY DIRECTOR, 40, slim, fit, attractive, seeks intelligent lovely lady, 30-40, for whatever happens. London. Ring 0660 204016

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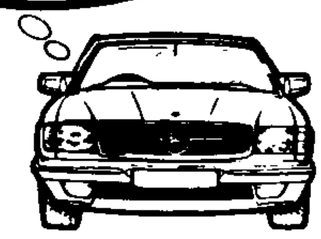

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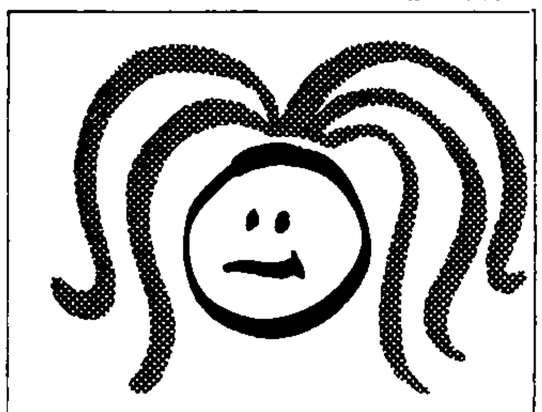

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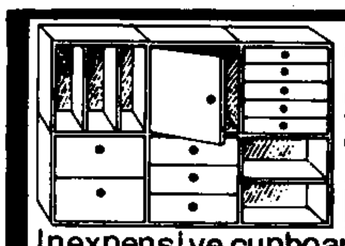

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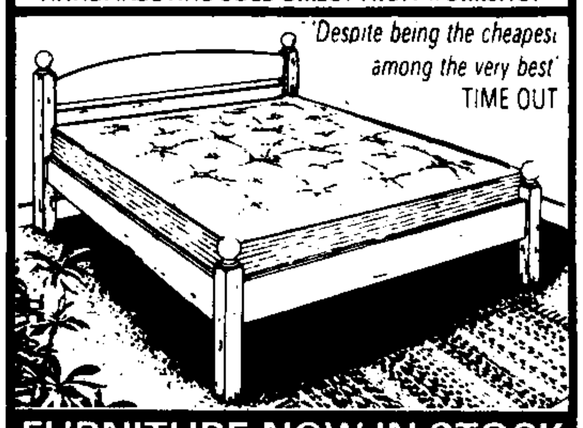

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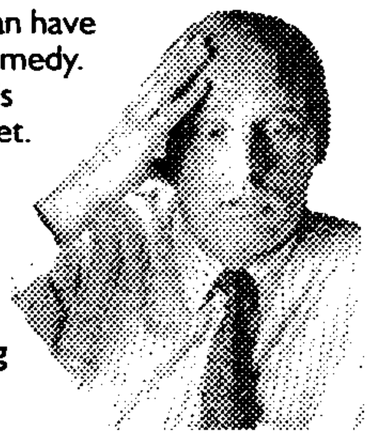

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